WORLD / A30

Venezuela's Chavez seeks papal mea culpa for native slaps

SPORTS / A31

RP five bows to Syria anew, clashes with Qatar for third

ACROSS / A17

Protests mar canvassing of votes by Comelec in Luzon

NEWS / A2

Tension heightens in Cotabato City, Shariff Kabunsuan

Comelec count puts Pichay in 10th place

By Leila B. Salaverria, Jocelyn R. Uy and Cathy Yamsuan

FOR THE FIRST TIME, PROSPERO PICHAY, A senatorial candidate of the administration's Team Unity (TU), barged last night into the Magic 12 in the canvass of returns by the Commission on Elections.

Pichay's 10th place in the Comelec's "partial

COMELEC/ A23

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS
Monday, May 21, 2007 ★★ 11 sections / Vol. 22 / No. 162 P18 website: www.inquirer.net

Bush presidency worst in history, says Carter

PANALO SA KAPALPAKAN!

WASHINGTON—FORMER US President Jimmy Carter blasted George W. Bush's presidency as "the worst in history" in international relations and denounced British Prime Minister Tony Blair's loyal

BUSH/ A23

ELEKSYON
2007
COMELEC
NAMFREL

COMELEC			NAMFREL		
75,043 local precincts out of 225,000 election precincts nationwide As of 9:30 p.m. May 20, 2007			84,876 of 224,748 precincts (37.76%) As of 8:22 p.m. May 20, 2007		
1	LEGARDA	4,399,726	1	LEGARDA	5,633,410
2	ESCUDERO	4,294,609	2	ESCUDERO	5,504,222
3	VILLAR	3,692,773	3	LACSON	4,861,789
4	PANGILINAN	3,666,165	4	VILLAR	4,607,874
5	LACSON	3,552,968	5	PANGILINAN	4,498,689
6	AQUINO	3,394,119	6	AQUINO	4,409,844
7	ARROYO	3,253,545	7	ANGARA	4,018,899
8	ANGARA	3,222,037	8	ARROYO	3,680,216
9	RECTO	2,849,908	9	HONASAN	3,672,038
10	PICHAY	2,688,133	10	CAYETANO, A	3,520,542
11	HONASAN	2,684,597	11	TRILLANES	3,453,958
12	ZUBIRI	2,674,872	12	PIMENTEL	3,383,080
13	CAYETANO, A	2,616,136	13	ZUBIRI	3,313,590
14	DEFENSOR	2,614,426	14	RECTO	3,251,879
15	TRILLANES	2,465,916	15	PICHAY	3,157,923
16	PIMENTEL	2,444,886	16	DEFENSOR	3,053,347
17	MONTANO	2,259,648	17	MONTANO	2,673,422
18	ROCO	2,065,263	18	ROCO	2,640,488
19	SOTTO	2,038,831	19	OSMENA	2,346,348
20	MAGSAYSAY	1,777,864	20	SOTTO	2,235,002
21	OSMEÑA	1,624,704	21	MAGSAYSAY	2,073,827
22	SINGSON	1,398,116	22	COSETENG	1,588,793
23	ORETA	1,223,757	23	ORETA	1,365,937
24	COSETENG	1,149,732	24	SINGSON	1,353,246
25	GOMEZ	668,911	25	GOMEZ	815,928
26	KIRAM	568,172	26	KIRAM	741,205
27	CHAVEZ	236,132	27	CHAVEZ	313,663
28	PAREDES	186,990	28	BAUTISTA	252,809
29	BAUTISTA	174,692	29	PAREDES	238,637
30	CAYETANO, J	125,396	30	CAYETANO, J	188,937
31	SISON	84,710	31	LOZANO	152,926
32	LOZANO	73,085	32	ESTRELLA	144,668
33	WOOD	72,990	33	SISON	139,460
34	ESTRELLA	65,618	34	WOOD	120,080
35	CANTAL	30,573	35	ENCISO	66,984
36	ENCISO	25,611	36	ORPILLA	63,405
37	ORPILLA	24,995	37	CANTAL	58,455

'I filled up ballots in Maguindanao'

Teacher details poll cheating in province

By Cathy C. Yamsuan

IT HAPPENED IN THE DEAD of night, hours before the polling precincts opened.

With armed guards supposedly watching over them, they were forced to fill blank ballots with the names of Team Unity senatorial candidates, starting with Luis "Chavit" Singson and Prospero Pichay.

Students and other children loitering in the school premises were purportedly even asked to mark the ballots with their thumbprints and sign their names on the voters' list.

This was how the "election" took place at least in some areas of Maguindanao—at least based on the account of a female public school teacher in the province.

The anonymous teacher talked to Lente, the legal arm of the watchdog Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting (PPCRV), Lente convenor Carlos Medina said at a press conference yesterday.

Hand in hand with the teacher's allegation, the National Citizens' Movement for Free Elections (Namfrel) accused Commission on Elections (Comelec) officers in Maguindanao of withholding copies of provincial election returns from Namfrel volunteers.

Namfrel secretary general Eric Alvia said the delay in the turnover of the ERs rendered suspect the authenticity of whatever documents would be given Namfrel in the future.

Namfrel chair Edward Go said Maguindanao's 336,000 votes were enough to influence the outcome of the 11th and 12th places in the senatorial race.

Go said that instead of votes being tallied in precincts, all ballot boxes were hauled to the provincial capitol where the votes were counted. But no Namfrel volunteer was allowed to witness this.

Namfrel's Maguindanao chair Fr. Eduardo Tanudtanud, OMI, said: "Our volunteers were told that municipal election officers issued a verbal order to withhold the release of all copies of the

I FILLED/ A23

Pineda questions priest's win

By Tonette Orejas
Inquirer Central Luzon

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—LOSING candidate Lilia Pineda is contesting the victory of Fr. Eddie Panlilio as Pampanga governor.

Pineda's lawyer has filed a notice of appeal on the ruling of the provincial board of canvassers (PBOC) that had denied a petition seeking the exclusion of the certificate of canvass of votes from Mabalacat in Friday's canvassing.

Mabalacat had seven "excess and spurious" election returns (ERs) when the municipality had only 399 precincts, the petition said.

The appeal is expected to be filed today with the PBOC, which is chaired by Commission on Election provincial supervisor Temie Lambino.

Lambino announced the PBOC's junking of the petition after the Mabalacat municipal board of canvassers (MBOC) confirmed the "error in mathematical computation" it reported in a certification issued to Pineda's lawyer.

The MBOC earlier issued to Aramis Mendoza, Pineda's counsel, an amended certification that the town had 399 election returns and that it had no excess or spurious ERs.

Vivina Dabu, Panlilio's lawyer, said the certification was "not an of-

PINEDA/ A22

SEWER Lorena Oringo makes shoulder bags out of campaign tarpaulins at her home. AUGUST DELA CRUZ

Cousins recycle campaign billboards into school bags

By Kristine L. Alave

TWO ENVIRONMENTALLY CONscious entrepreneurs are proving that politicians have some use, after all.

Binggirl Clemente and her cousin, Judy Pustrado, have found a use for the election campaign billboards and tarpaulin bound for the trash bin.

With the midterm elections over, the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority has ordered the removal of the posters and other campaign materials in the metropolis.

Clemente, a member of Mother Earth Philippines, said she and her cousin were bracing for a deluge of materials for their project.

They make sling bags for boys and simple shoulder bags for girls.

"We'd like to introduce the concept that the political banners can be a useful thing, like a bag," Clemente said.

She said politicians should instruct their supporters and cleanup crews to save their campaign banners and send the materials to her group.

Because her group doesn't have enough funds to make the bags and pay their sewers, she urged politicians to support the project.

Or they could start their own community of sewers who could make the bags, Clemente said.

She volunteered to help the politicians set up their own recycled-bag programs.

COUSINS/ A23

Common Pampanga folk assert will from the ground

By Amando Doronila

ANALYSIS

AN ODD EVENT IN PAMPANGA—THE election of a Catholic priest, Eddie Panlilio, as governor—has arrested national attention in a poll seriously flawed by irregularities and has been hailed as a pointer to a new dawn of hope for Philippine politics.

It was a singular event of truly ground-breaking significance. In another rare moment in the history of the country, a Catholic priest won election to a secular office, in a country where the Constitution explicitly declares the separation of Church and State.

The other extraordinary aspects of his election include Panlilio's standing for office without the official blessings of the Catholic hierarchy and without campaign funds and the backing of any political party. Panlilio challenged the entrenched traditional power brokers in Pampanga, including a candidate associated with reputed "jueteng lord" Rodolfo "Bong"

COMMON/ A22

Masbate: Old dynasty out, new dynasty in

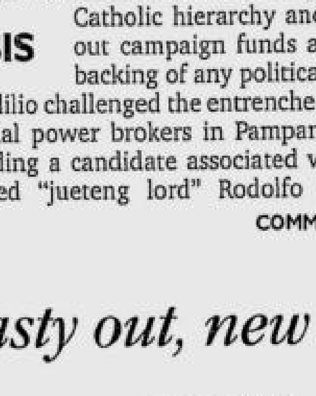
By Michael Lim Ubac

AFTER HOLDING KEY ELECTIVE POSItions in Masbate for more than 70 years, the Espinosa clan, save for one in-law, was voted out of power last week.

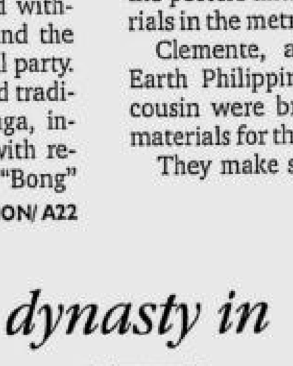
The long wait was over on Friday when the Commission on Elections declared the winners in the gubernatorial and three congressional races.

In the gubernatorial race, Rep. Emilio Espinosa Jr., House deputy speaker for Luzon, lost by a wide margin—22,659 votes—to Dr. Elisa Olga Kho, the spouse of his arch-rival, outgoing Gov. Antonio

MASBATE/ A22



MALOLI Espinosa loses congressional bid. AFP



BOBBY Q. LABALAN/INQUIRER SOUTHERN LUZON

DR. Elisa Olga Kho replaces husband as governor.

GOOD PRODUCT, BAD PACKAGING

Why 3 Kapatiran bets lost

By Christian V. Esguerra

IDEALISM ALONE DOESN'T WIN elections.

The candidates of Ang Kapatiran realized this when returns in the May 14 elections began coming in showing they were headed for defeat in the senatorial race.

No one among Martin Bautista, Jesus Zosimo Paredes and Adrian Sison even came within striking distance of the Magic 12, according to a separate tally of the National Citizens' Movement for Free Elections.

Conceding defeat, Paredes and Bautista analyzed what went wrong in their seemingly promising political advocacy and the lessons they learned.

To begin with, the two candidates admitted that idealism alone couldn't bring about victory even for three highly driven candidates campaigning under the banner of "God-centered politics."

"There was too much focus on the advocacy and we forgot about the nitty-gritty of a political campaign," Paredes, a lawyer, told the INQUIRER in a recent interview.

He and Bautista wondered, for instance, how the Kapatiran candidates could win without television or radio advertisements. To think that the biggest spenders in the campaign, such as the administration's Prospero Pichay, focused heavily on a media campaign.

"There was really a problem with awareness," said Bautista, a

WHY/ A23

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(All in exact order)

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WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Extreme Northern Luzon and Mindanao will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. the rest of the country will be partly cloudy to cloudy with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms.

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	Cebu	Partly Cloudy
Laoag	Cloudy with Rains	Tacloban	Partly Cloudy
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

COMPILED BY KATE PEDROSO, INQUIRER RESEARCH/05/20/07 SOURCE PAGASA

Grenade blast raises tension in South

By Ryan Rosauro, Edwin O. Fernandez, Nash Maulana, Jeoffrey Maitem and Germelina Lacorte, Inquirer Mindanao

COTABATO CITY—TENSION HERE AND IN NEARBY SHARIF Kabunsuan province continued to rise with another explosion going off in Parang town on Friday.

This developed as the National Citizens' Movement for Free Elections (Namfrel) urged the Commission on Elections and the police to brace for more violence in Lanao del Sur as results from areas where elections were held were starting to come in.

Earlier, the Comelec suspended balloting in at least 15 Lanao del Sur towns following incidents of poll-related attacks.

The elections in the towns of Tubaran, Madalum, Lumbanayague, Sultan Dumalondong, Marugong, Pualas, Lumbatan, Lumbacaunayan, Butig, Kapai, Binidayan, Kapatagan, Bayang, Lumba Bayabao and Masiu will be held on May 26.

In the Parang incident, Chief Supt. Joel Goltiao, chief of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) police, said unidentified suspects fired what might have been a rocket-propelled grenade toward the Parang Elementary School near midnight on Friday.

But the explosive missed the school, where ballots from nearby towns were being kept, and landed in a vacant lot instead.

Goltiao said no one was injured in the explosion, which he said was apparently meant to disrupt the transfer of ballot boxes from the towns of Barira, Buldon and Matanog for clustered tabulation in Parang.

Two days earlier, masked men torched the municipal hall of Buldon town.

Goltiao said the Parang explosion took place even as authorities were still figuring out the motive and the identity of the perpetrators of the bomb attacks in Sultan Kudarat and Datu Odin Sinsuat towns on Election Day and Friday's blast in Cotabato City, which left one child dead and over two dozen people wounded.

Cotabato City Mayor Muslimin Sema described Friday's explosion at the Weena bus terminal as "perpetrated by people who do not fear God."

"In short, they belong to a satanic organization," he said.

Sema said that while the police were eyeing extortion behind the bombing, he was not discounting the possibility that a terror group was behind the attack.

"There are traces of the Jemaah Islamiyah terrorist group in this blast but we are validating this theory, " Senior Supt. Paniares Adap, city police chief, said.

He said the extortion angle was being looked into since the bus company had received extortion letters in the past.

The Cotabato City police said they had launched a manhunt for a man and a woman who allegedly brought in the box containing the powerful improvised explosive device shortly before the blast.

Jun Adam, Weena Bus terminal manager, said he believed he was the target of the bomb attack because of his refusal to give in to demands of extortion groups.

"(A terror attack) is a strong possibility because the bomb was placed in a highly populated area which was a terminal … the attacker was not merely sowing terror, it (bomb) was meant to maim and kill people," Adap said.

But party-list group Suara Bangsamoro said the bombing could have been staged to draw the people's attention away from the massive cheating and electoral fraud in Maguindanao, where Team Unity's 12-0 sweep in the latest tally has been questioned.

In Marawi City, Hadji Abdullah Dalidig, Lanao del Sur Namfrel chair, said the tempers of the town's candidates were also rising.

Dalidig cited yesterday's attack on the houses of Ganassi town Mayor Macapudi Baguio and his brother in Marawi.

No one was reported hurt in the attack but two of Macapudi's vehicles were damaged, preventing his security men from pursuing the perpetrators.

In Quezon province, a political leader of gubernatorial candidate and incumbent Vice Gov. Jayjay Suarez was shot dead in front of his house in Infanta town on Friday night, police said Saturday.

But the police denied the killing of Victorino Villaflor, 58, was politically motivated.

"This killing has nothing to do with politics. We're looking at a land dispute as a possible motive in the case," said Senior Supt. Hernando Zafra, Quezon police director.

But Suarez's father, Rep. Danny Suarez, said they believed the killing of Villaflor was due to the victim's role in his son's candidacy.

Suarez said the victim was the program coordinator and emcee during their campaign sorties in northern Quezon. *With Marlon Ramos, Inquirer Southern Luzon*

GMA wants polls automated as part of development plan

By Michael Lim Ubac

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO yesterday called for the full automation of the country's elections.

Ms Arroyo said electoral reforms, particularly automated elections, were "essential to political stability" as contained in her medium-term development plan.

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye himself admitted that "political will" was needed to replace the country's "antiquated system of voting, canvassing and tabulation that our forebears used several decades ago."

"Yet, for this miracle of modernization to take place, we need to act as one nation committed to elevating its electoral system to a state-of-the-art democratic exercise," said Bunye in his weekly column, "View from the Palace."

He noted that the latest issue of "The Economist" described the country's voting system as "daft" which puts the people through an "absurd ordeal."

"While the article only describes the difficulty of having to fill up a ballot with 20-plus names, and therefore giving an advantage to well-known names, our voting system has a host of other antiquated features that need to go," he said.

Bunye pointed out the flaws in the electoral process: Missing names, the presence of dead people's names on voters' lists, electoral fraud and very slow counting of votes.

According to him, three years between now and the 2010 elections should give the Commission on Elections sufficient time to institute the needed electoral reforms, notably the automation of the election process.

The administration, he said, is "certainly up to the challenge of electoral reforms. Let us hope that such reforms will form part of a nation-building agenda that all sectors and political parties can support, as a vehicle towards constructive political engagement and increased people's participation in national governance."

He said, however, that the processes involved in automation—from legislation to budgetary support and a trouble-free, fully transparent and acceptable bidding process—must be in place.

Bunye said that the three years it took the Comelec—from the time it bought computer equipment to modernize the 2004 elections to the time Congress passed into law the automation of elections this year—was sufficient time to facilitate the implementation of an automated polling system.

He noted that Congress did pass a law on automated elections early this year but the Comelec said it came too late to implement it.

Heroes' fund

THE INQUIRER IS SPEARHEADING A fund drive for the victims of violence during the recent elections.

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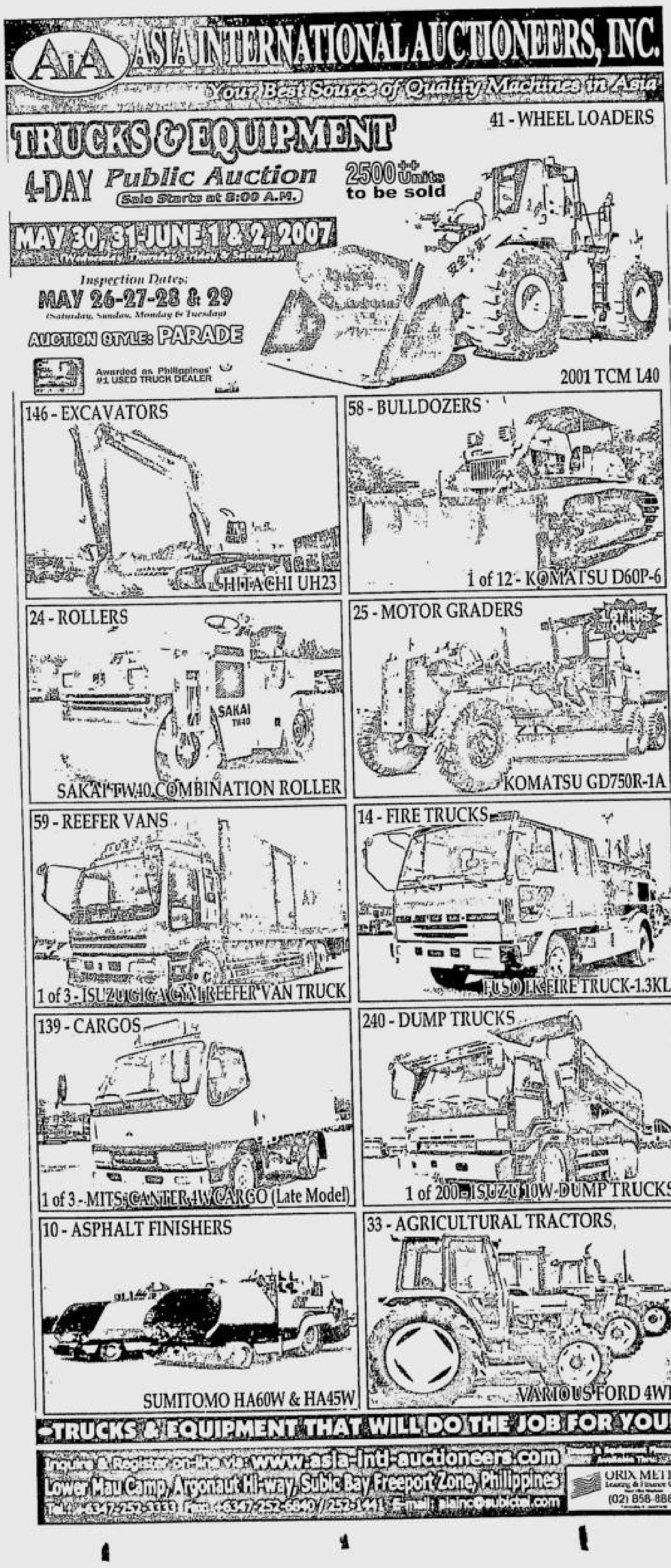

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Shades of '04 polls, Padaca claims of motion filed by Dy

By Melvin Gascon and Villamor Visaya Jr., *Inquirer Northern Luzon*

ILAGAN, ISABELA—REELECTionist Gov. Maria Gracia Cielo Padaca yesterday said the delay in her proclamation as the governor of Isabela, an election hot spot, was a repeat of the harrassment she was subjected to during the 2004 polls.

Padaca was referring to the way her proclamation was blocked in 2004 by a Comelec resolution issued by controversial Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano, after the camp of her rival, Benjamin Dy, moved to refer to the Comelec in Manila the question on whether to continue the canvassing of 109 contested election returns.

Errors and defects

It was the camp of Dy that moved for the exclusion of the 109 returns, representing about 29 percent of the precincts in Ilagan, over supposed errors or defects, such as missing thumbmarks and defective seals. They also moved to exclude 61 returns from Tumauini town.

The setting aside of the contested returns by the municipal board of canvassers (MBOC) has delayed the provincial canvassing—but only for the gubernatorial contest. The contested returns reportedly show Padaca winning over Dy.

Padaca questioned why the Ilagan board of canvassers ruled to exclude the contested ERs but counted the votes for vice governor and other lower positions, and even went on to proclaim the winning local candidates.

"If there were questions on the integrity of the election returns, why were the votes of the other candidates counted at all?" she asked.

Padaca, citing the Comelec tally from 35 of Isabela's 36 towns, said she was leading with 207,244 votes against the 195,176 votes of former Governor Dy, for a margin of 12,068 votes. The results she cited excluded all returns from Ilagan town.

Sweeping allegations

The PBOC count as of 2 p.m. Sunday, however, included the canvassed returns from Ilagan and Tumauini, except the contested returns. It showed Padaca still leading with 219,425 votes and Dy with 214,150 votes, for a difference of 5,275 votes.

In the final quick-count tally conducted by the Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting (PPCRV), Padaca won with 230,366 votes to 216,614 for Dy, for a margin of 13,752.

Rep. Faustino Dy III, Benjamin Dy's brother, denied Padaca's allegation that their camp was deliberately delaying her proclamation by using intimidation and threats.

"Those are sweeping allegations ... We are the underdogs here but we are being tagged as if we have no right [to raise these questions]," said Dy III. He claimed his brother won, based on the monitoring of results by their camp.

At any rate, Padaca said she was relieved when the provincial board of canvassers, on the motion of her lawyer, Leila de Lima, ruled to direct the Ilagan MBOC to reconvene and make a provisional tally for the votes for governor.

She called on Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos, who also happens to be the commissioner in charge for Cagayan Valley, not to delay the canvass and the proclamation of winners.

Sudden disappearance

Stalled canvassing in Meycauayan City also had tempers rising in Bulacan.

The delay was caused by the sudden and mysterious disappearance of the election officer of Meycauayan City.

The Meycauayan results were expected to determine the final winner in the closely contested contest among former Gov. Roberto Pagdanganan, Board Member Joselito Mendoza and Vice Gov. Aurelio Plamenco

Yesterday, Zoilo Perlas, Central Luzon Comelec director and concurrent Bulacan election officer, said they were still looking for Guilbert Pallogan, election officer of Meycauayan, further delaying the canvass.

Rosario Reandelar, an official at the Bulacan Comelec, however, said Pallogan's staff delivered the ballot boxes containing the election returns from Meycauayan.

Official results from 21 of '24 towns and cities in Bulacan showed Mendoza leading with 274,033 votes. Pagdanganan received 251,301 votes while Plamenco got 159,224 votes. *With a report from Carmela Reyes, Inquirer Central Luzon*

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Leviste says elder Ermita behind stay of proclamation

By Jocelyn R. Uy

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY EDUARDO ERMITA could be using his position as the "little president" to save his son Edwin from defeat in the Batangas vice gubernatorial race.

This according to Mark Leviste, who won over Ermita by 18,269 votes based on the Commission on Elections' final official count.

The unofficial tally of the Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting (PPCRV) and the National Citizens' Movement for Free Elections (Namfrel) also showed that Leviste defeated Ermita by roughly 47,000 votes.

However, while the Comelec had proclaimed the other winning candidates in Batangas, the poll body ordered the suspension of Leviste's proclamation as the new vice governor, to give due course to the petition filed by Ermita declaring a failure of elections in the towns of Sto. Tomas and Taysan.

"I will not be a hypocrite. I cannot help but think that the executive secretary has something to do with the suspension of my proclamation as the new vice governor... that his son is using the influence and power of his father," Leviste said yesterday in a press conference in Manila.

Based on a copy of the Comelec's final Statement of Votes (SOV), which was shown to the media yesterday, Leviste received a total of 334,847 votes while Ermita garnered 316,578 votes.

The poll body upheld the victory of former Mayor Vilma Santos as the new Batangas governor, Victor Portugal Jr. as Taysan mayor, Edna Sanchez as the new Sto. Tomas mayor, but suspended Leviste's proclamation.

Acknowledged as vice governor

On Friday, Leviste said he ran into the elder Ermita, who came with President Macapagal-Arroyo to pay tribute to the teacher who died in the May 15 pre-dawn fire at the Pinagbayanan Elementary School in Taysan.

He said he approached the executive secretary and greeted him. Ermita, he said, acknowledged him as the new vice governor.

"But while he referred to me as the new vice governor, they were preparing a petition against me," Leviste said.

Election Commissioner Resurreccion Borra, who signed the order issued by the Comelec en banc, directed the provincial board of canvassers to suspend Leviste's proclamation three hours after it received the petition on Friday.

"Commissioner Borra overstepped his authority. His decision to issue a suspension order was capricious, whimsical and despotic," Leviste said.

In the petition, which Ermita filed before 2 p.m. on Friday, Leviste was accused of massive vote-buying and having a hand in the burning of the school in Taysan, which claimed the lives of a poll watcher and a teacher.

Ermita alleged that Leviste and gubernatorial candidate Armand Sanchez distributed large sums of money, ranging from P5,000 to P100,000 each to barangay officials and families in the two towns.

The 29-year-old Leviste denied the accusations of Ermita, whom he described as a "desperate, disgruntled and sour-graping candidate."

He said that he worked on a shoe-string budget and without the financial support of his parents.

Leviste said that as a champion of education, he would not even think of burning down a school.

"The bias of Commissioner Borra is very evident. He did not even exert efforts to come up with a well-structured suspension order and merely resorted to copying verbatim the petition of [Ermita]," he said, reading from a prepared statement.

Leviste's lawyer, Ma. Rosario Aranguren, said she would file a motion for reconsideration in the Comelec to lift the suspension of her client's proclamation.

San Carlos mayor finally laid to rest

SAN CARLOS CITY—CARRYING PLACARDS demanding justice, residents of this Pangasinan city marched behind the hearse carrying Mayor Julian Resuello's remains to his resting place here yesterday.

The procession left Resuello's political campaign headquarters at 11 a.m., proceeded to the Catholic Church here for a Mass, and continued on for a brief pause in front of City Hall before proceeding to the Holy Garden Memorial Park in Barangay Agdao where he was buried at 2:30 p.m.

Thousands of residents lined the route to the cemetery, also carrying placards saying "Justice for Mayor Julian Resuello." Black ribbons adorned many fences and houses.

Resuello was shot dead on April 28 as he worked the crowd at an auditorium where a beauty pageant was being held to mark the fiesta here. He was campaigning for the vice mayoral slot.

He died two days later at St. Luke's Medical Center in Quezon City.

A suspect in the slaying was arrested in a hospital in this city. Police are hunting a second suspect.

Resuello's son Julier and his brother Joseres were elected mayor and vice mayor, respectively, in the May 14 elections. *Yolanda Sotelo-Fuertes, Inquirer Northern Luzon*

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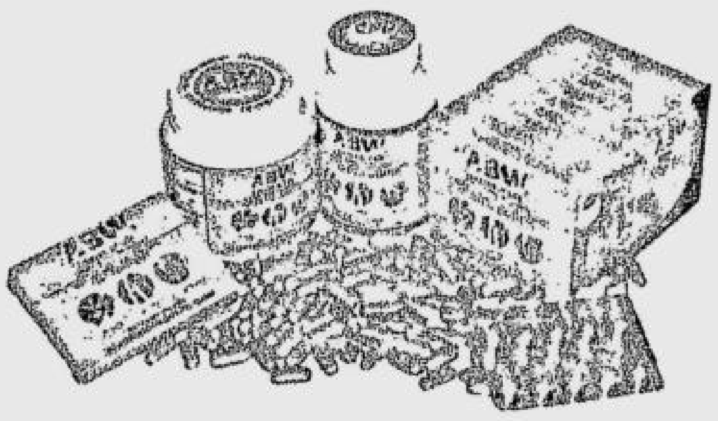

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Namfrel computers safe from hackers, group's chief says

By Cathy Yamsuan

THE NATIONAL CITIZENS' Movement for Free Elections (Namfrel) yesterday assured the public that its computer system is impenetrable to hackers, following reports that someone tried to gain access to its network Thursday night.

"We cannot prevent people from trying but we can prevent people succeeding," an unperturbed Namfrel chair Edward Go told reporters yesterday.

Go made the assertion after admitting that the Internet service at its headquarters at the La Salle gym in Greenhills, San Juan, began "flickering" that night.

While the incident did not disrupt Namfrel's operations, Go said desk officers on duty alerted the Philippine Long Distance Telephone Company and Smart Telecommunications "to check and make sure the system was up."

Go expressed confidence that it would not be easy for hackers to break into Namfrel's computers.

"Normally, you install a 'firewall' to prevent attempts to disrupt the system. But our systems provider Xinapse provided us not just one firewall but a Great Wall with six firewalls," Go said during a news conference.

"And if the first (line of defense) detects something, the system shuts itself down so nothing can come in and we can still operate internally," he said.

Namfrel secretary general Eric Alvia pointed out that Namfrel had "offsite duplicates" that could recall or reproduce any information destroyed by hackers.

While Namfrel has not identified the person or party that may have attempted to disrupt its computers, Go was unfazed by the incident.

"Maybe there are malicious persons trying to test (us), trying to do harm. We cannot avoid attempts but we can ensure that we will not be hacked," he said.

Go even appeared amused when he related how "someone from Mindanao" sent "unverified information" through fax several times to Namfrel headquarters.

He said the crude attempt to influence Namfrel's tabulations was quickly noticed since it was inconsistent with previous messages sent from the same area.

Go also said that Namfrel's tabulation of the 2007 elections was faster than the one conducted in 2004.

As of yesterday, five days after the election, Namfrel had encoded, verified and released tabulations from 25.9 percent of precincts nationwide.

In 2004, Go said Namfrel had released only 17.5 percent of nationwide tabulations five days after the May 11 election.

"We have historical data to prove we are not that slow. People only get that impression because the television network counts had zoomed up quickly. However, their sources were not official while our data come from election returns," he said.

Apologize for blaming NPA for fire, cops told

By Christine O. Avendano

THE PHILIPPINE NATIONAL POLICE should apologize to the New People's Army for blaming the latter for the May 15 torching of an elementary school in Taysan, Batangas, when two people were killed, the Communist Party of the Philippines said in a statement.

It turned out that policemen were allegedly behind the fire.

PNP officials yesterday ignored the CPP statement because they were busy completing their investigation. Officials said they were likely to file charges of murder and arson against the policemen-suspects.

The PNP was investigating top police officers in the Calabarzon area for the pre-dawn fire at the Pinagbayanan Elementary School in Taysan that killed teacher Nellie Banaag and poll watcher Leticia Ramos.

Under investigation and in the custody of the PNP Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) were Taysan police chief Chief Insp. Elpidio Ramirez, Taysan deputy police chief of police Insp. Ruel de la Cruz, Regional Special Operations Group Batangas team leader Insp. Roberto Marinda and his deputy SPO2 William Relos Jr.

Marinda and Relos were identified by witnesses as two of the men who allegedly started the fire at the school while Ramirez and De la Cruz were under investigation for lapses in carrying out their duties.

Director Wilfredo Garcia, chief of the PNP's Directorate for Operations, took exception to the INQUIRER report the other day which quoted CIDG investigators as saying that security personnel, who included De la Cruz and members of the Philippine Air Force, were ordered to leave their posts prior to the razing of the school.

Barias confirmed that investigators were still studying the order given to De la Cruz.

"We are looking at whether there was criminal intent or not in that order," he said in a phone interview.

CPP spokesperson Gregorio "Ka Roger" Rosal demanded that the PNP take back its earlier accusation that the NPA was behind the torching of the school.

He also asked the police to "apologize to the victims of this crime and to the people of Taysan."

In a statement posted on the CPP website, Rosal told Taysan residents: "You know very well that our people's army cannot harm the people in any way."

But Barias said there was nothing for the PNP to apologize for.

The police are now focused on getting to the bottom of the incident which "at this stage," he said, "points to the policemen as being behind the fire."

Darlene proclaimed over Manny Pacquiao

GENERAL SANTOS CITY—REelectionist Rep. Darlene Antonino-Custodio was proclaimed the winner of the congressional race in the first district of South Cotabato over boxing champion Manny Pacquiao by the Commission on Elections at 2 p.m. on Sunday.

Custodio ran under the Genuine Opposition banner while Pacquiao was allied with the administration.

Pacquiao only received about half of Custodio's 80,992 votes in one of the most closely followed political contests in the country.

Pacquiao could not be reached for comment but sources in the "People's Champ Movement," the political machine of the boxing star, said he was sad about the outcome of his first shot at politics but vowed that this was not the end of his political career.

Local political observers said Pacquiao's closeness to President Macapagal-Arroyo brought about his defeat. Others said his fans did not vote for him as they preferred that he remain a boxer.

In an interview earlier over ABS-CBN television's TV Patrol, Pacquiao said he accepted the results of the election and was proud about challenging an established political family in his native city. General Santos is part of the first congressional district of South Cotabato where the Antoninos are a well-entrenched political clan.

"*Hinihingi ko lang po sa nanalo na sana po ay tuparin nila yung mga ipinangako nila sa mga tao* (My only request to the winner is that she fulfill the promises she made to the people)," Pacquiao said. *Aquiles Zonio, Inquirer Mindanao*

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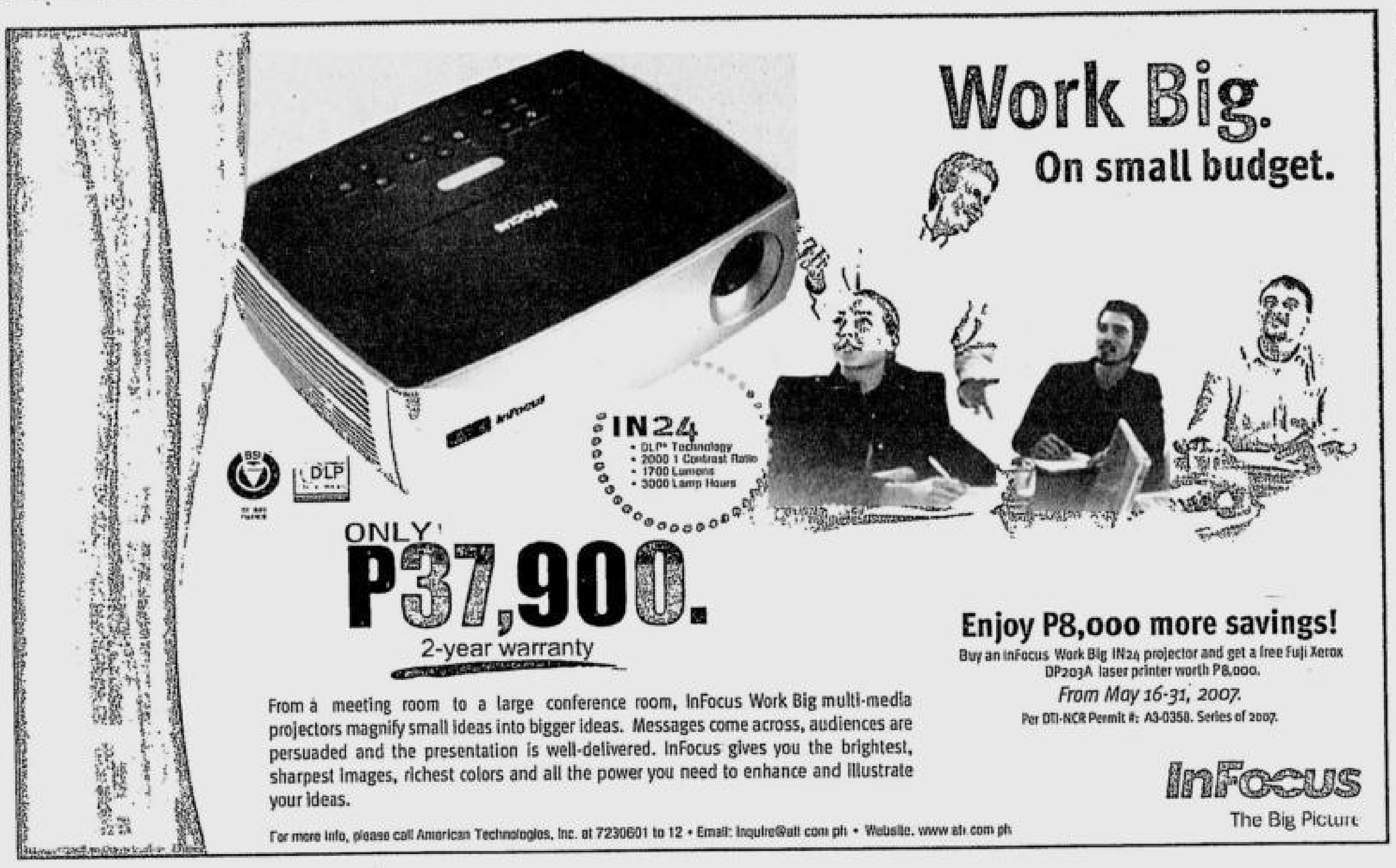

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TU bets rap claim they spent too much

TWO TEAM UNITY SENATORIAL bets—Sen. Joker Arroyo and Rep. Prospero "Butch" Pichay—have disputed pollster AC Nielsen's findings on their multimillion-peso political ad spending for television and radio during the campaign.

Arroyo demanded receipts from AC Nielsen to prove its claim, or an apology from the officials of the marketing information company, which came out with the "false and malicious" report that he had spent P170 million on his TV and radio ads.

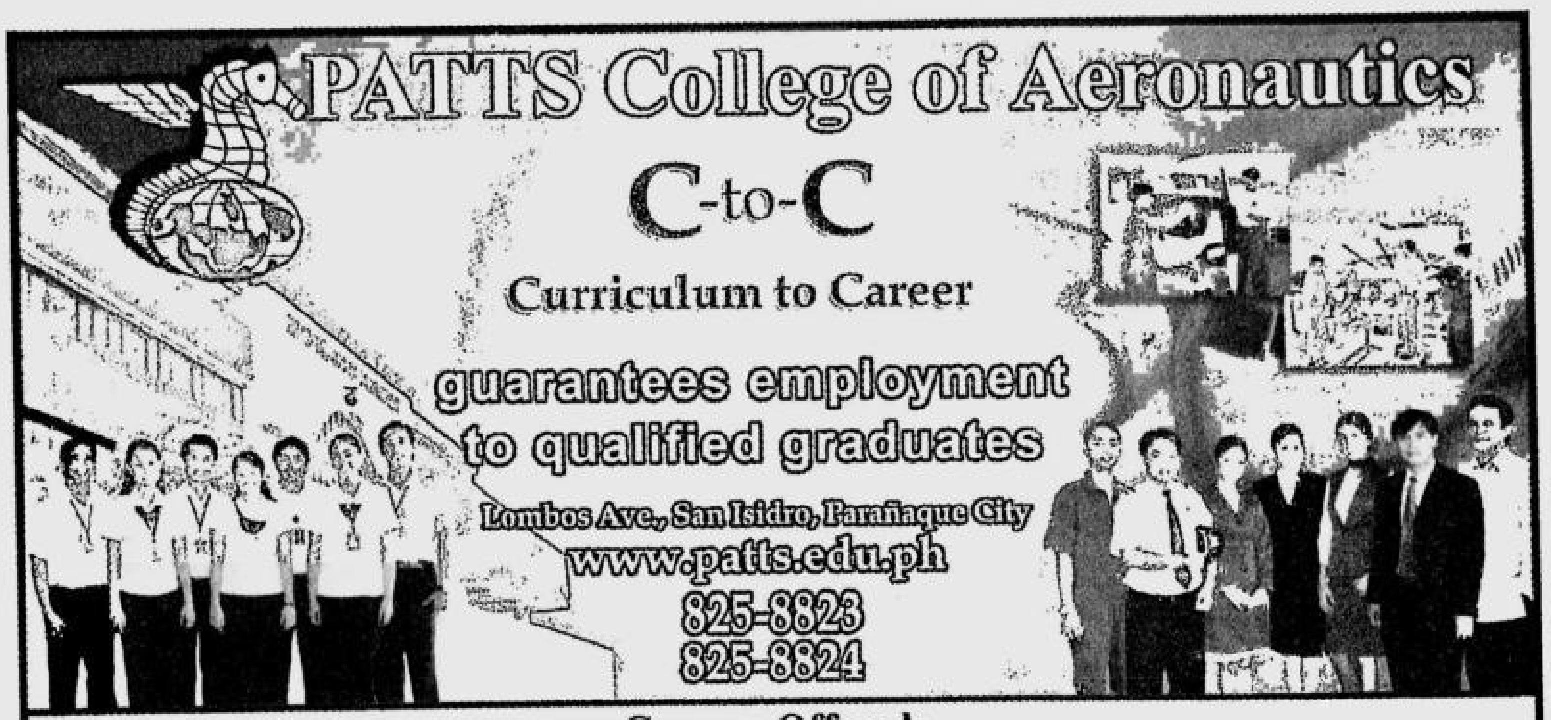
Pichay said that AC Nielsen had it all wrong, since he was given hefty discounts by the networks that got the lion's share of his ads.

He denied the AC Nielsen report which pegged him as the biggest election spender, disbursing P202.746 million in the 90-day campaign.

"If Nielsen insists that its figures are correct, figures which I flatly deny because I have not spent nowhere near that kind of money, an investigation is in order to determine who is right or wrong," said Arroyo.

Arroyo said that AC Nielsen's erroneous report cost him a "tremendous number of votes."

"Repeating such libel in the midst of the national canvass impugns the integrity of my election. This issue must be settled," he said, and challenged AC Nielsen to come up with the receipts. "Bigness is no guarantee of honesty and correctness. This is exemplified by Nielsen." *Gil Cabacungan Jr.*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Administration bailiwick goes for GO this time

LINGAYEN, PANGASINAN—WHEN THE DUST from the May 14 elections finally settled, Pangasinan, a traditional bailiwick of the administration, delivered the vote to the opposition.

The final and official results of the senatorial contest in the province was 6-4-2, in favor of the Genuine Opposition candidates.

Pangasinan is the province of President Macapagal-Arroyo's late mother and allies, former President Fidel Ramos and Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr.

Prior to the elections, De Venecia had predicted a 9-3 victory in favor of the administration's Team Unity slate in the province, citing an aggressive campaign by the administration Lakas-CMD which he, Ramos and Ms Arroyo head.

Pangasinan has a voting population of at least 1.36 million, the biggest among the four provinces in the Ilocos region.

Based on complete official results from the provincial board of canvassers, GO senatorial bet Loren Legarda topped the senatorial race with 696,639 votes, followed by fellow GO candidate Francis Escudero with 625,499 votes.

Third place went to independent candidate Francis Pangilinan (570,024 votes) while the fourth and fifth spots went to GO candidates Manuel Villar Jr. (557,292) and Panfilo Lacson (540,693), respectively, both reelectionist senators.

Only TU's Edgardo Angara (sixth, 492,629), Joker Arroyo (eighth, 427,790), Ralph Recto (ninth, 423,613) and Prospero Pichay (12th, 375,274) made it to the Top 12.

GO's Benigno Aquino III (seventh, 463,635) and Alan Peter Cayetano (10th, 421,195) and independent candidate Gregorio Honasan (11th, 390,818) completed the winning slate.

Local political analysts said opposition candidates won in the province because De Venecia was too busy campaigning for his reelection in the fourth congressional district so much that he failed to campaign hard for the administration's senatorial candidates.
Gabriel Cardinoza and Melvin Gascon, Inquirer Northern Luzon

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Monday, May 21, 2007
7th Week of Easter

1st Reading: Acts 19:1-8
Gospel: John 16:29-33

The disciples said to Jesus, "Now you are speaking plainly and not in veiled language! Now we see that you know all things, even before we question you. Because of this we believe that you came from God."

Jesus answered them, "You say that you believe! The hour is coming, indeed it has come, when you will be scattered, each one to his home, and you will leave me alone. Yet I am not alone, for the Father is with me.

"I have told you all this, so that in me you may have peace. You will have trouble in the world; but, courage! I have overcome the world."

Commentary

The early Church had to deal with the baptism of John and those who had not yet heard of the baptism of the Spirit that he preached about, and also his preaching about the one who would come after him. They encountered those who had repented and changed their lives but were still waiting. They preached Jesus as the one and the Spirit came upon them, after being baptized in the name of Jesus the Lord. And what about us—have we repented? Do we listen to the word of Jesus and pray for the Spirit to come upon us so that we might preach the Word?

Jesus speaks again and again—it takes grace, the Spirit, and time to understand even a small bit of what Jesus the Word made flesh is saying to us. Jesus knows that we will be scattered and we will leave him alone, betraying him (though the Father is with him always). We are told to remember that we will suffer in the world but we are to have courage for Jesus' life and death and resurrection has overcome everything.

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Levi's, Lewis, what's in a name? Plenty, CA rules

By Leila B. Salaverria

THE MAKER OF Levi's jeans and its Philippine affiliate have lost their bid to sue a local jeans manufacturer for trade name infringement for making "Lewis Strong" denim pants.

Dismissed

The Court of Appeals turned down the petition of Levi Strauss & Co. and Levi Strauss (Philippines) Inc. to reverse Department of Justice resolutions in 1998 and 1999 that dismissed their infringement complaint against Frederick Lim, owner of F. R. Pazzo Garments and Marketing Co. which makes Lewis Strong jeans.

In ruling against Levi's, the appellate court said Lewis Strong jeans could not be easily confused with Levi's jeans because of the "immense dissimilarity" between the appearance and names of the respective brands.

Not similar

"For one, the individual markings appearing on Lewis Strong jeans are not confusingly similar to Levi's trademarks and are not likely to cause confusion or deception to the buying public as to make them believe that said jeans belong to Levi Strauss and Co.," the court said in its April 30 decision.

Wrong avenue

"For another, the respondent did not fraudulently intend to pass of its products as Levi's jeans since the trade name 'Lewis Strong Co.' is prominently and visibly printed on several parts of the leather patch," it said.

The appellate court said that, in the first place, the petition of Levi Strauss & Co. and its Philippine partner should have been dismissed outright because of the wrong avenue for redress they took.

The court said the petition for review filed by Levi's makers was not allowed under the rules of court since the Department of Justice was not a quasijudicial body.

It said the DOJ's decision could only be questioned if it was issued with grave abuse of discretion.

No grave abuse

The court nevertheless discussed the arguments presented by Levi's to dispel the notion that the case was being dismissed on technicalities.

It said there was no grave abuse of discretion on the DOJ's part when it denied the motion for reconsideration of the dismissal of the complaint against Lewis Strong.

Levi's filed the infringement complaint against Lim following a raid of his Quezon City office.

Bernabe Alajar, former regional security manager of Levi Strauss & Co., said in his complaint that Lim had infringed on the trade name and registered trademarks of Levi's.

No copycat

Lim, for his part, countered that the Bureau of Patents, Trademarks and Technology Transfer had approved the registration of the trademark Lewis Strong because the latter was not similar to Levi's trademarks. He added that he did not copy any of Levi's trademarks.

The investigating prosecutor recommended the dismissal of Levi's complaint in March 1998 for insufficient evidence.

Petition filed

Levi's filed a petition for review, which was denied by the Chief State Prosecutor in June 1998. Then Justice Secretary Serafin Cuevas upheld the dismissal in August 1999.

Levi Strauss & Co. is a United States-based corporation engaged in the manufacture of clothes internationally. It has used the trade name Levi's Strauss & Co. since 1850 and the Levi's trademarks since 1873.

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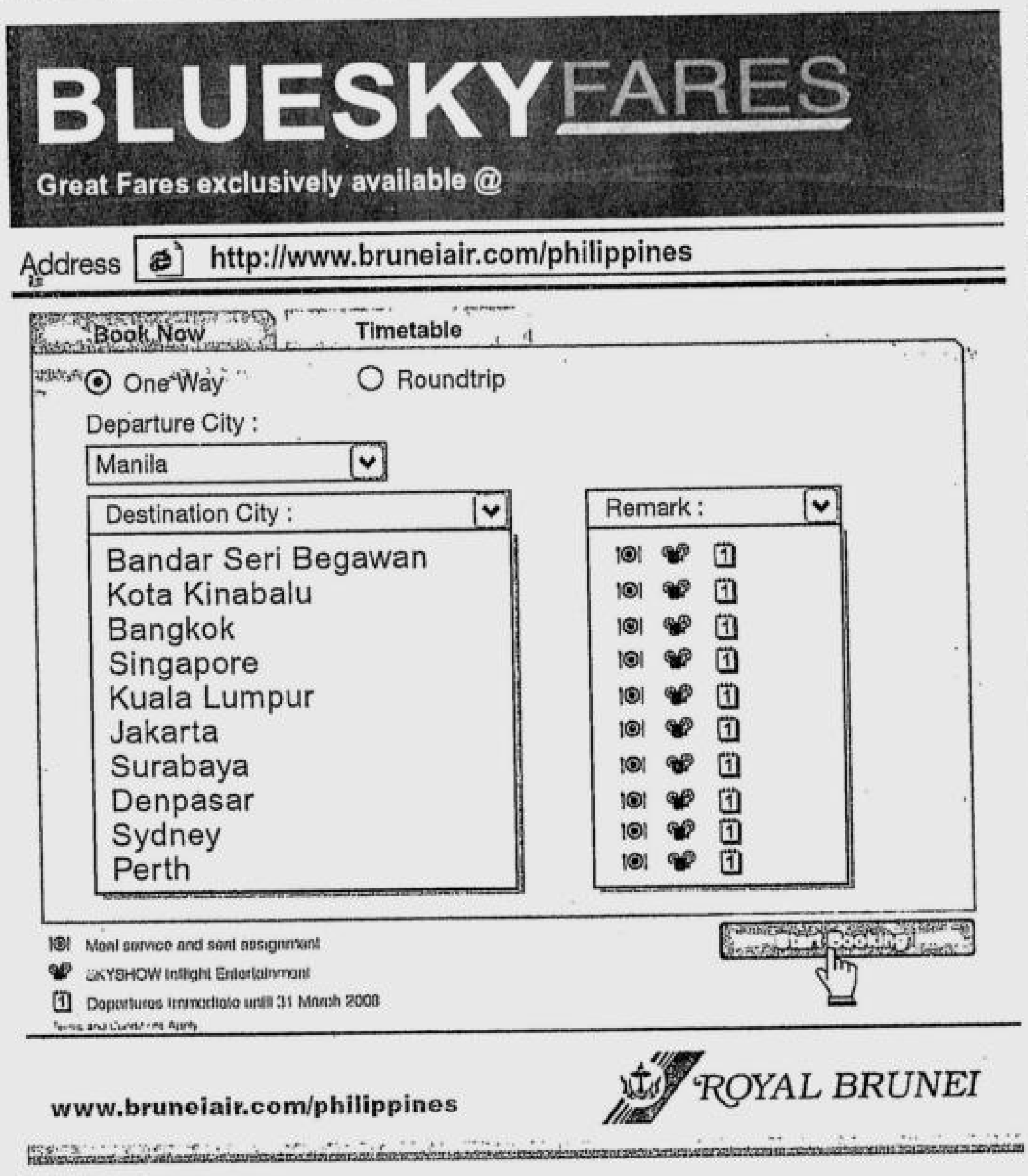
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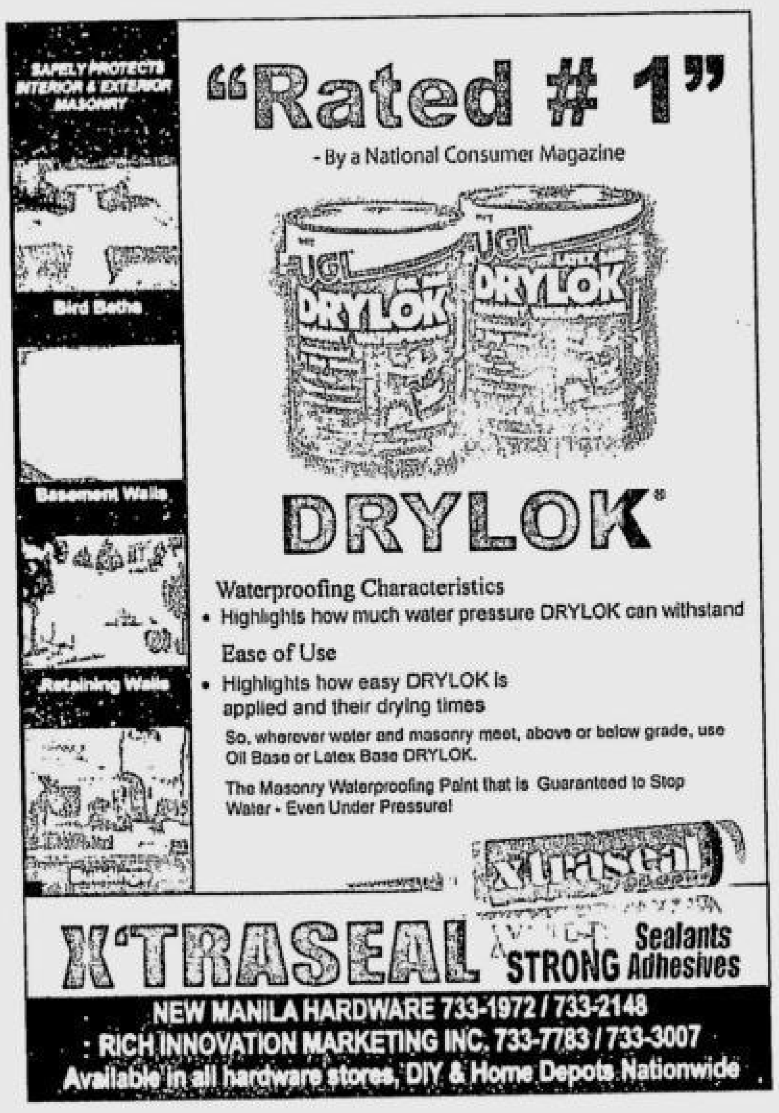

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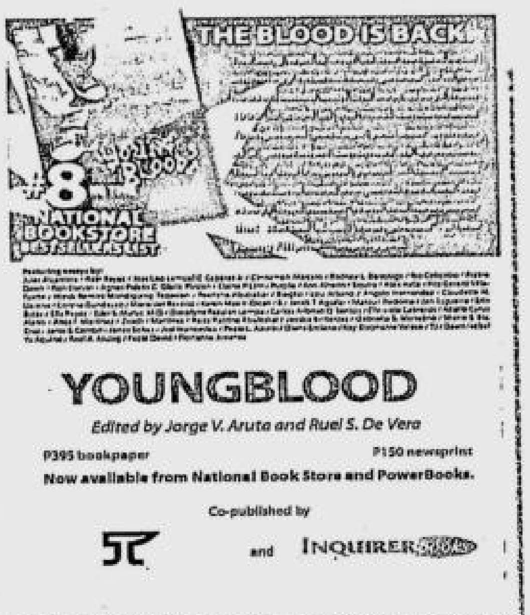

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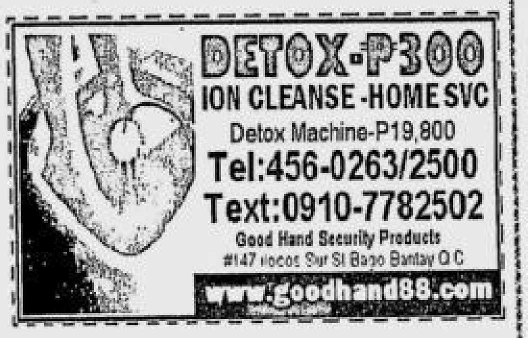
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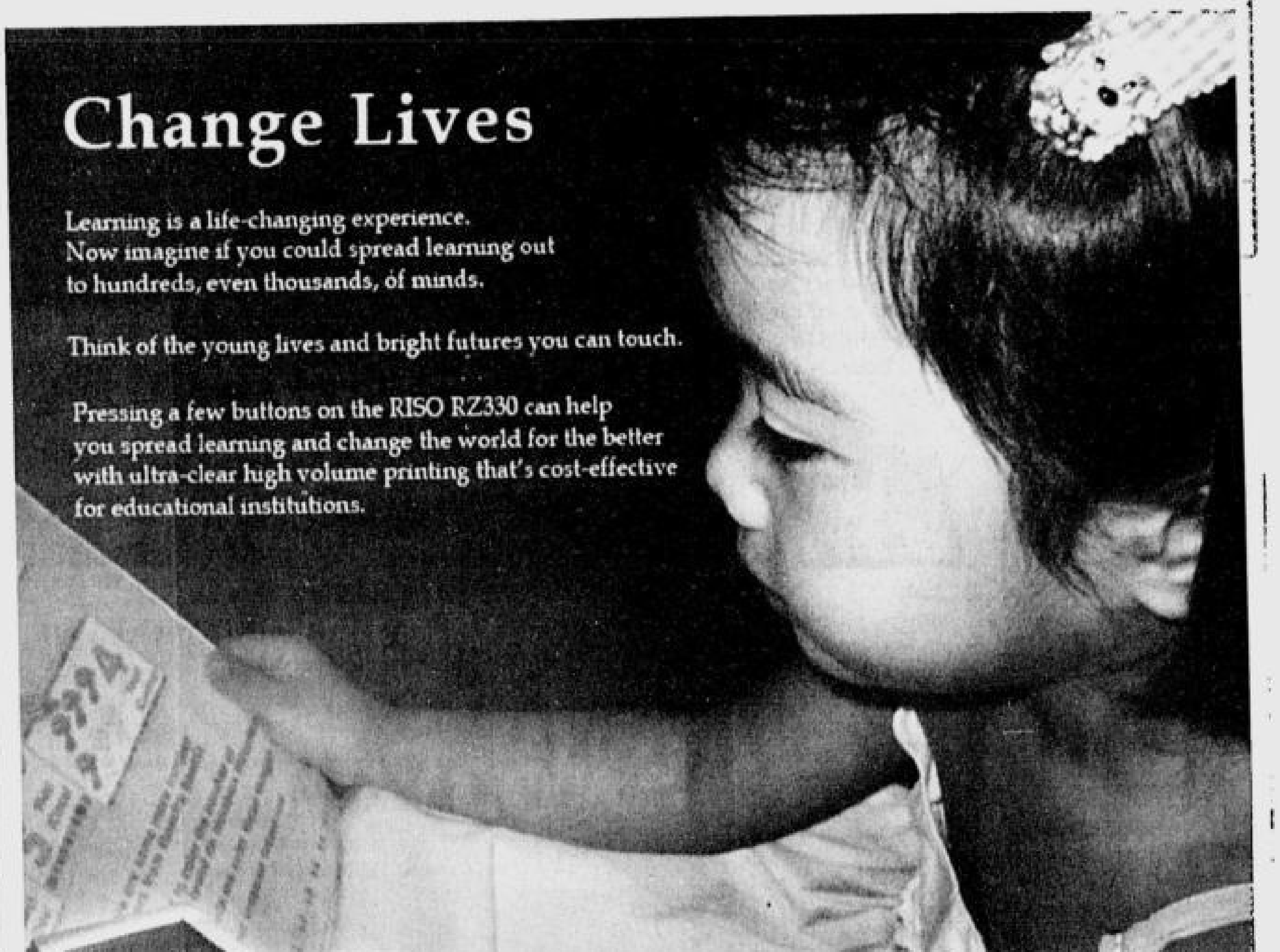
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2 agencies pass the buck on liquids ban on planes

By Tarra Quismundo

THE OFFICE FOR TRANSPORTATION SECURITY (OTS) needs a detailed implementing plan drafted by aviation authorities before it can downgrade the ban on liquids, aerosols and gels from carry-on luggage at Philippine airports.

OTS head executive assistant Dan Tardecilla said the office would require a detailed plan from enforcing agencies, including the Manila International Airport Authority (Miaa) and airlines, before it could grant Miaa's request to relax the ban and allow regulated amounts of the substances on board passenger cabins.

"The Miaa and airlines should complete a plan on how to implement and we will review [the security regulation]. This is to make sure that the amendment on the security plan will be implemented well, because it entails a new screening procedure," Tardecilla told the INQUIRER.

But airport security chief retired Gen. Angel Atutubo said the Miaa had been ready with such a plan and that all the agency needed was OTS' go-signal for its implementation.

"That's no longer necessary. All they have to do is issue [an order] for the downgrading. We are ready with the procedure, and the general manager will then issue an order to all airport security officers about the implementation of the ICAO regulation," Atutubo said.

The Miaa has been pushing for the Philippines' compliance with the revised regulations of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), which lifted the total ban on liquids, aerosols and gels (LAGs) from carry-on luggage and allowed 100 ml or less of these substances to be brought inside passenger cabins.

The proposal has been pending before the OTS, the agency under the Department of Transportation and Communication which has the sole authority to approve or reject new or revised security regulations in the country's ports.

Philippine airports currently limit carriage of all LAGs of any amount in carry-on baggage, while airports in other Asian cities, the United Kingdom, the United States, Europe and Australia have adopted the ICAO's downgraded regulation.

The ICAO banned LAGs from airplane cabins worldwide in August last year in the light of a foiled terror attack involving liquid bombs in the UK. Following a reassessment of the global security situation, the ICAO then recommended that regulated amounts of LAGs could be allowed in carry-on bags.

"There should be a comprehensive plan that the Miaa and airlines should initiate. It should detail who are responsible for the implementation, the time line, budget, the need for training for the new screening procedure ... It's the whole gamut of procedure," Tardecilla said.

Air Force working to foil kite string

PHILIPPINE AIR FORCE ENGINEERS hope to develop a mechanism to protect helicopters from kite string.

A piece of string caught in the rotor blades of a helicopter could bring it down as was believed in the recent crash of a Huey helicopter in Cebu that killed seven civilians and two airmen.

Seeking to prevent kites from again crippling its helicopters, the Air Force Research and Development Center in Lipa City has begun efforts to keep string away from its choppers.

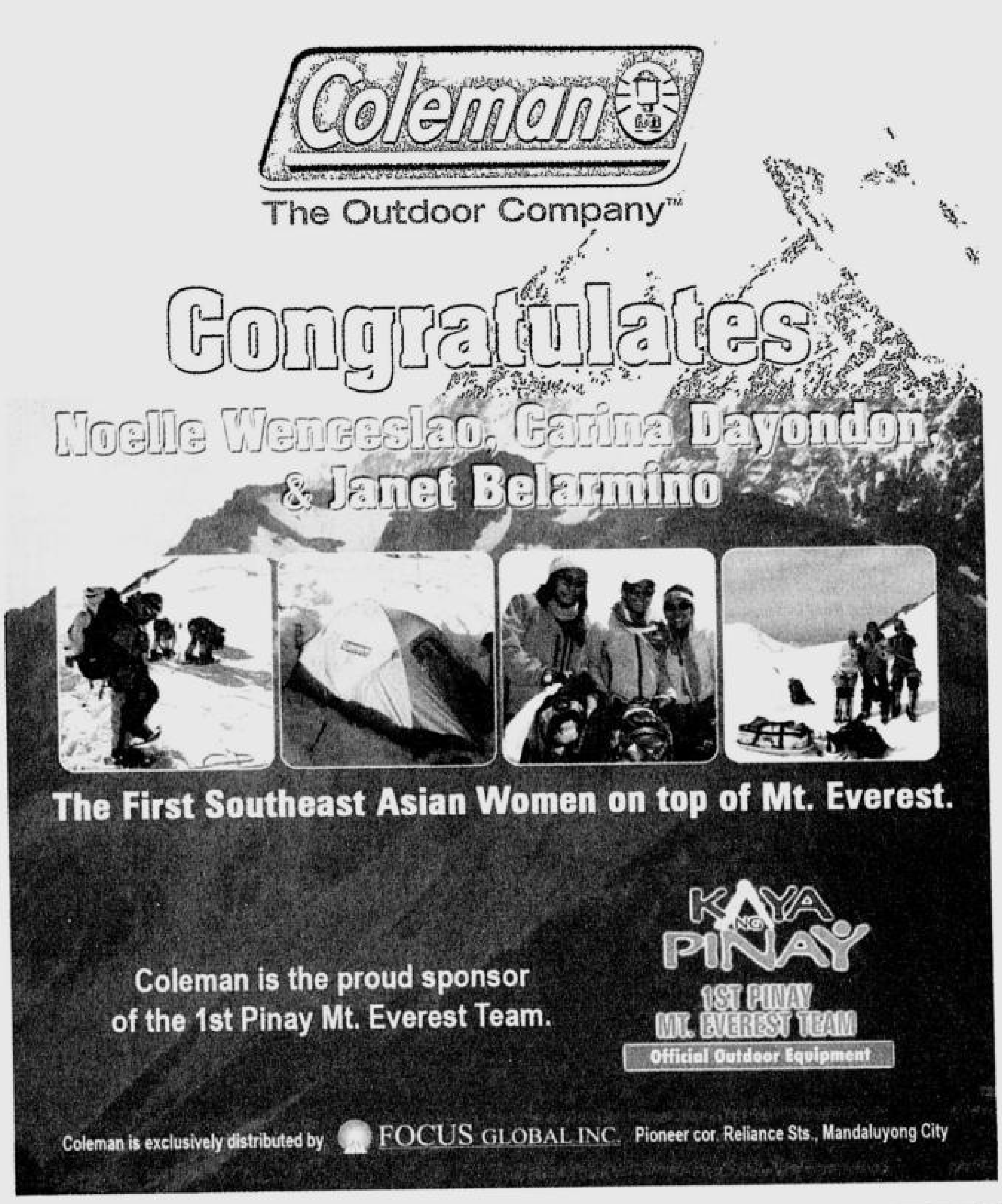
The Air Force recently received 50 second-hand UH-1H helicopters, better known as the Huey, from the United States.

Maj. Gen. Fernando Manalo, PAF Air Logistics Command chief, said the center had begun brainstorming on such an upgrade on the Huey, which dates back to the '60s and '70s.

"It will be a bit difficult. We are looking at how we can possibly install a mechanism that will prevent string from getting entangled in the rotor blades," Manalo said.

He admitted that coming up with such an addition was a tall order. The Huey has a wire cutter located on its fuselage but it has proved ineffective in keeping out kite string.

Tarra Quismundo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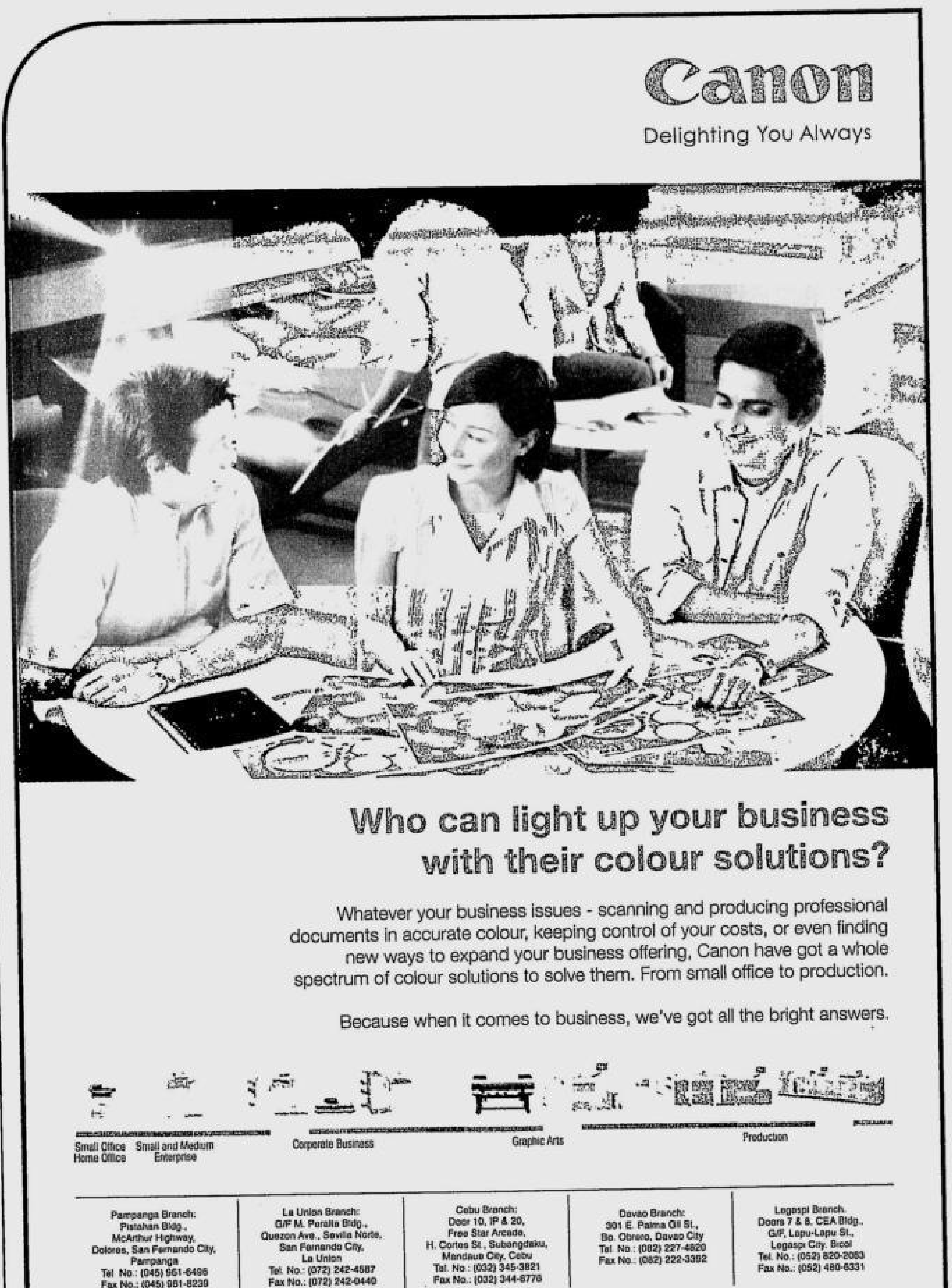
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Business Can be simple

Troops back in metro?

MILITARY OFFICIALS will meet today to assess whether troops should return to Metro Manila's slums.

Maj. Gen. Ben Dolorfino, who heads the military's National Capital Region Command, yesterday said he was preparing a report on how the troops performed during their deployment before the elections.

However, he could not say if they would be brought back.

"It will really depend on the assessment," Dolorfino said in a phone interview.

More than 250 officers and enlisted personnel of the Armed Forces of the Philippines were pulled out before the May 14 polls from 19 depressed barangays in Metro Manila which they had called home since November last year.

The presence of the military in Metro Manila had been denounced by militant organizations who said the soldiers were there to dissuade residents from voting for leftist party-list groups in the polls.

The military, however, said that it was there to help local residents with security and public works projects. *Christine O. Avendaño*

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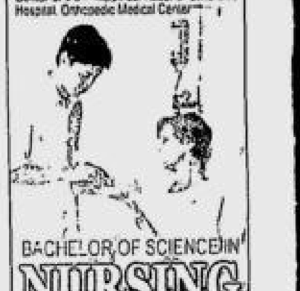

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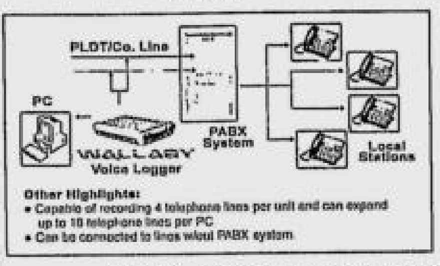

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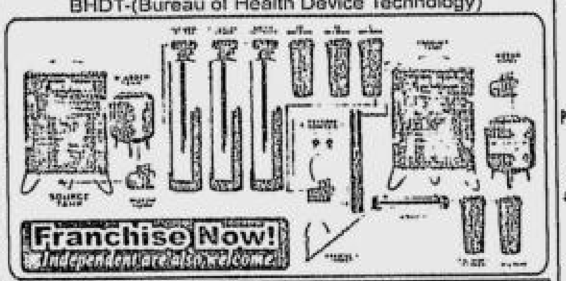

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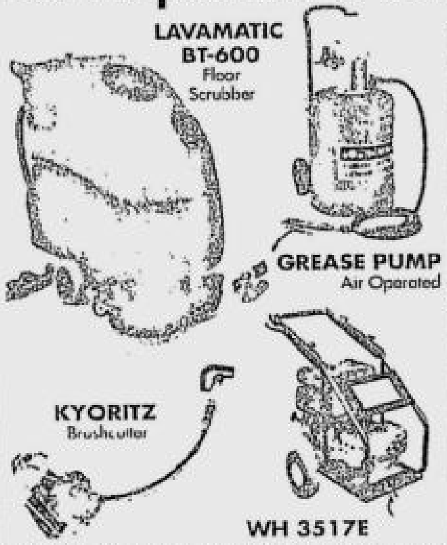

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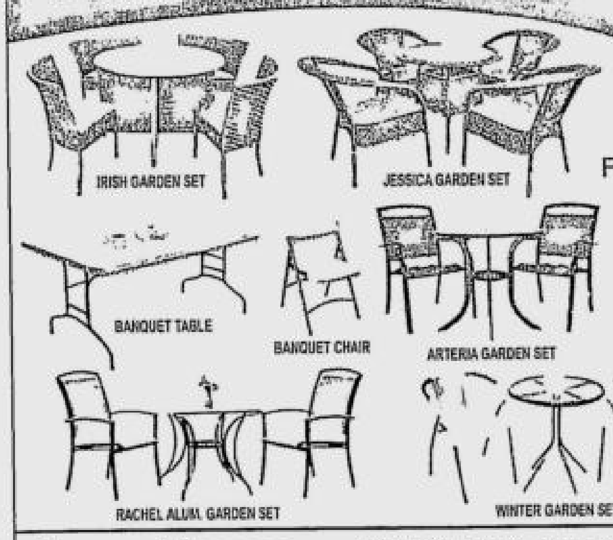

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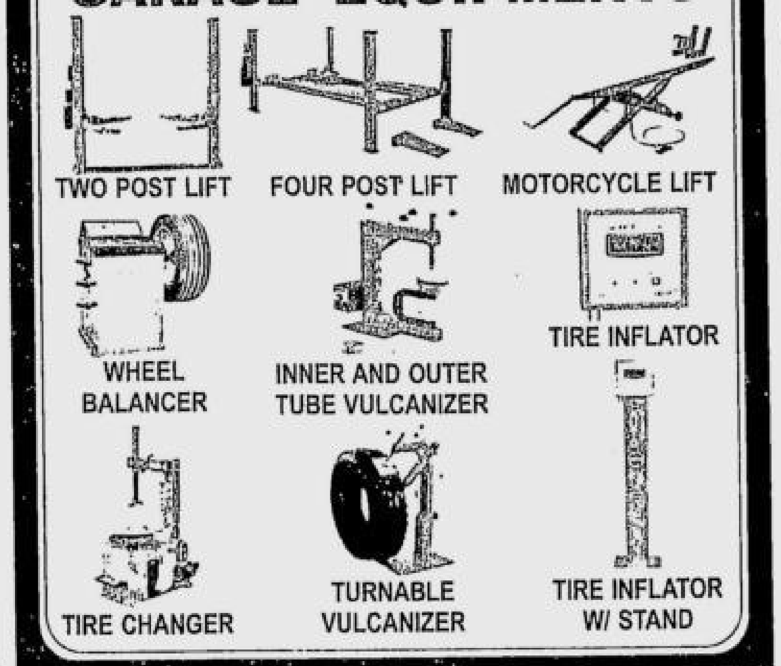

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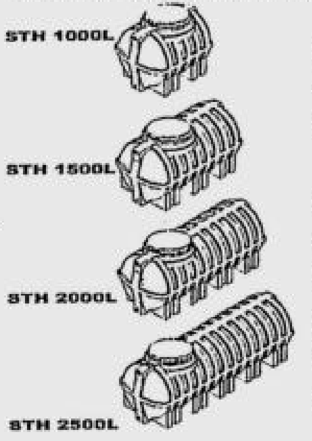

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Batangas begins program to plant millions of trees

By Marlon Alexander Luistro
Inquirer Southern Luzon

BATANGAS CITY—THE DEPARTMENT OF Environment and Natural Resources will raise at least 300,000 tree seedlings in Batangas this year to be planted in forests and mountain ranges. The agency believes this will help absorb pollution and improve the air quality in the province.

The tree seedlings form part of the 20-million total target seedlings per year under the DENR's Green Philippines Program.

DENR studies show that while the country has 30 million hectares of forest land, only 7 million hectares or 23 percent of forests remain today.

Since March, 42 employees in two DENR offices in Batangas—the Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office and the Community Environment and Natural Resources Office (Cenro)-Batangas City—have started collecting seedlings of various tree species for the project.

Nursery

A one-hectare vacant lot at Fernando Air Base (FAB) in Lipa City has been selected for the nursery.

Arnel Nisperos, forest ranger of Cenro-Batangas City, said that as of May 9, DENR employees had raised a total 15,000 seedlings in the FAB nursery, which are expected to be ready for large-scale planting in June or July.

They have raised at least nine tree species: Ipil-ipil, narra, alibangbang, fire tree, akasya, nangka, caballero, golden shower and tuba-tuba.

The DENR employees visit the area in groups daily doing tasks such as re-potting, seed sowing and watering.

Among the DENR's 100-ha target tree-planting sites are the timberlands of San Juan and Rosario towns in Batangas, Mt. Malarayat in Lipa City and Mt. Makiling in Laguna.

According to Nisperos, trees are important because they hold soil and water when it rains, preventing landslides and flash floods. When planted along riverbanks, they prevent soil erosion and floods.

Environment problems

Mildred Cepillo, DENR information officer, told the INQUIRER that planting trees would solve the problems of global warming, ozone layer depletion, worsening air quality, lost livelihood, poverty and other environment and socioeconomic problems.

To complete the target of planting 300,000 seedlings in Batangas, Cenro-Calaca has established its own nursery and will put up 14 more nurseries in western Batangas, in partnership with the private and public sectors.

Cenro-Calaca supervises the province's first district consisting of Taal, Lemery, Calaca, Balayan, Lian, Calatagan, Tuy and Nasugbu towns.

ROMY HOMILLADA

GONE FISHING
These men have got it right—the sun, the sea and a few bites on a weekend morning in the reclamation area off Manila Bay—away from the noise, the violence, the cheating, carping and whining of the election season.

Mining investments seen to rise this year

By TJ Burgonio

ENVIRONMENT SECRETARY Angelo Reyes sees brighter prospects for the mining industry this year with investments projected to reach $348 million.

REYES

Reyes said the expansion of the HPAL facility in Coral Bay in Palawan would bring in a whopping $154 million, the continuing rehabilitation of the Carmen copper project in Cebu would bring in $97 million, and a gold project in Masbate, $36 million.

Another $23 million investment was expected from the construction of the base metal plant of TVI in Zamboanga del Norte and $21 million from the construction and development of the Didipio copper-gold project in Nueva Vizcaya, he said.

Advance in stage

Since the mining industry was revitalized in January 2004, Reyes said that a total of $694 million in investments had been generated. These investments are expected to rise further between now and 2010 as ongoing projects "advance in stage."

"As the projects advance in their development, additional direct employment is created in the areas where the projects are located. This augurs well for the government's employment and poverty reduction program," Reyes said.

Some 3,000 new jobs are expected to be generated this year, on top of the 6,500 jobs created since 2004, Reyes said.

Reyes said that if the priority projects materialized, the value of metallic and non-metallic minerals would grow to $1.385 billion this year, up from $1.282 billion in 2006, while mining's share to total exports would rise to 9 percent this year.

Mining country

"These levels, to the DENR's belief, are reflective of the country's mineral wealth and will elevate the Philippines to a 'mining country,'" he said.

In 2006, the mining industry's gross production was valued at P68.4 billion. Total exports of mineral and mineral products amounted to $2.06 billion, while taxes, royalties and fees from mining reached P3.1 billion. Employment from mining rose to 141,000.

The Philippines has 18 medium to large-scale mines, including the controversial polymetallic mine in Rapu-Rapu island in Albay that was allowed to resume operations in February following months of suspension due to a mine tailing spill in late 2005.

On top of these, there are 23 projects in advanced stage and 41 others in a stage of exploration, according to the DENR.

Reyes admitted that instituting reforms in the industry was "never easy" since there would always be two groups who would "agree or disagree" to these.

He said he expects to continue to tangle with nongovernment organizations over the adverse effects of the government policy to revitalize the industry, but said the best option was to engage them.

Right decision

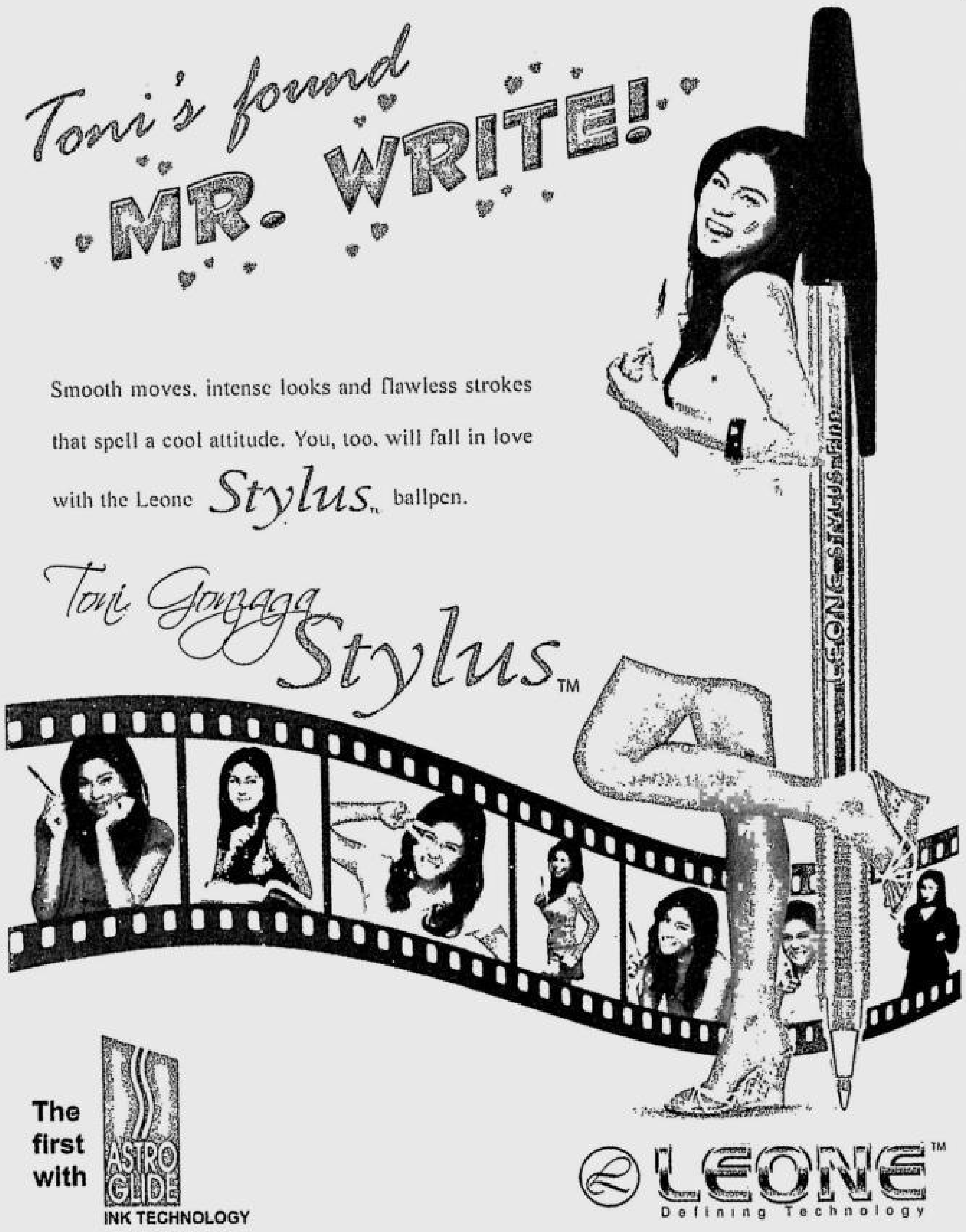
Reyes had come under criticism over his decision to lift the suspension on the operation of Lafayette-run mine in Rapu-Rapu island.

"While met differently by different sectors, the DENR believes that it made the right decision in Rapu-Rapu," he said.

In view of the incidents that had tainted the image of the industry, Reyes said he expected the foreign mining investors to employ the "best practices" and comply with Philippine laws and standards when they operate here.

It was imperative, he stressed, for mining companies to build "long-lasting relationships" with the communities and local government units, and educate them on the risks and impacts of their projects.

"Any effort to engage with the stakeholders should be anchored on sincerity and trustworthiness, not just for mere compliance with regulations or lip service," he said. "In the bottomline, the mining operation must contribute to real community development not just provide dole-outs to communities."



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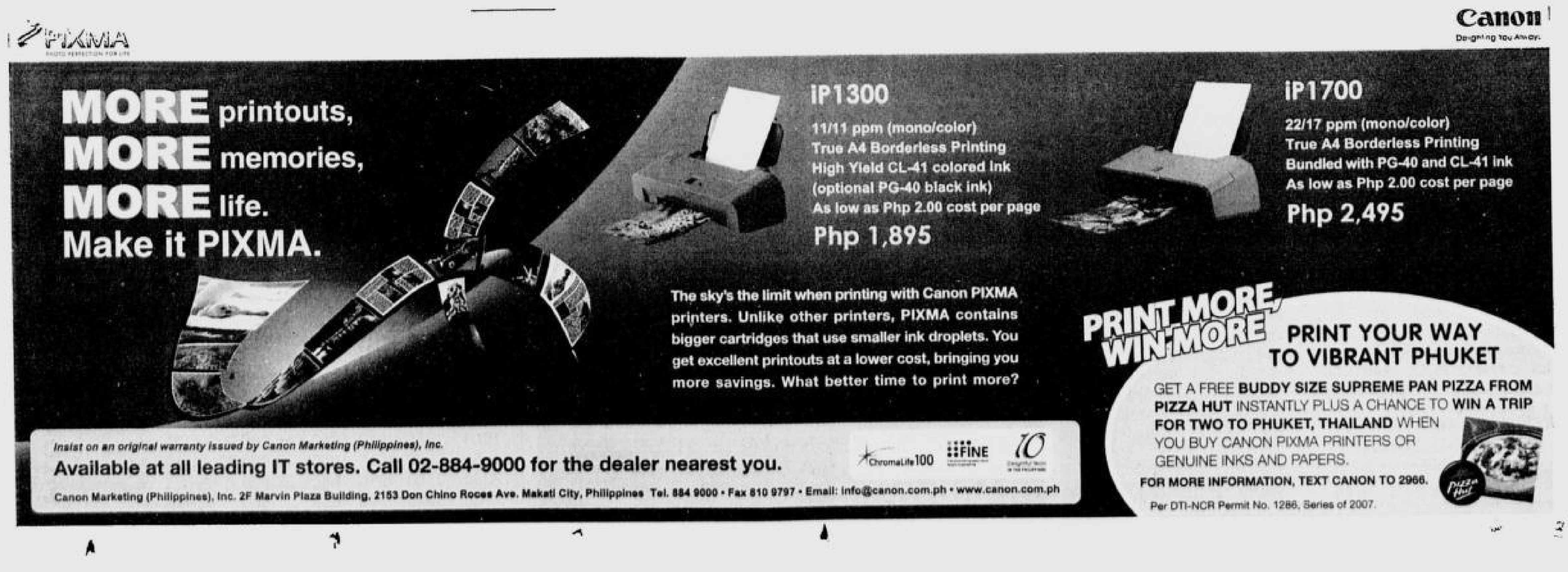

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NGO seeks probe of RP-China biofuel pacts

By TJ Burgonio

A NONGOVERNMENT ORGANIZATION is seeking an inquiry into the investment agreements that the Philippines and China recently forged, particularly those involving biofuel production which were signed by newly registered local companies.

Filipino and Chinese officials signed a raft of 19 agreements involving investments estimated at $4.9 billion, or P240.1 billion, during Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao's state visit to the Philippines on Jan. 15 and 16.

The agreements were aimed at broadening agriculture and fisheries cooperation between the two countries.

Among these were memorandums of agreement between Philippine and Chinese companies to develop bioethanol plants.

Dummies

The local companies are SB Integrated Biofuels Co., Palawan Bionenergy Development Corp., Negros Southern Integrated Biofuels Co., One Cagayan Resource Development Inc., Philippine Marine Technology Group Inc. and Philippine China Fisheries Consortium Inc.

But a check with the Securities and Exchange Commission showed that at least six of the companies were not registered, or if they were, were newly registered.

"Once Congress opens, the lawmakers should investigate this and get to the bottom of the truth," Steve Quiambao of Philippine Ecumenical Action for People Empowerment (Peace Foundation Inc.) said in an interview.

"They could be mere dummies."

Quiambao said the House of Representatives and the Senate should look into how the companies were able to sign the contracts, and who in the government facilitated them.

Congress will open on June 4.

Agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap said he would welcome any inquiry into the agreements and would appear at the hearings.

Based on SEC records, SB Integrated Biofuels Co., Negros Southern Integrated Biofuels Co. and Philippine Marine Technology Group were not on the list of registered companies as of March this year, Peace said.

On the other hand, Philippine China Fisheries Consortium registered with the SEC on Jan. 16 this year, the day the agreements were signed, according to Peace.

Newly registered

Palawan Bioenergy Development Corp. was registered only on Dec. 4, 2006, and One Cagayan Resource Development on July 6, 2006.

Integrated Biofuels Co. and Negros Southern signed separate agreements with Nanning Yong Kai Industry Group Co. Ltd. for the manufacture of bioethanol, according to copies of the agreements obtained by Peace.

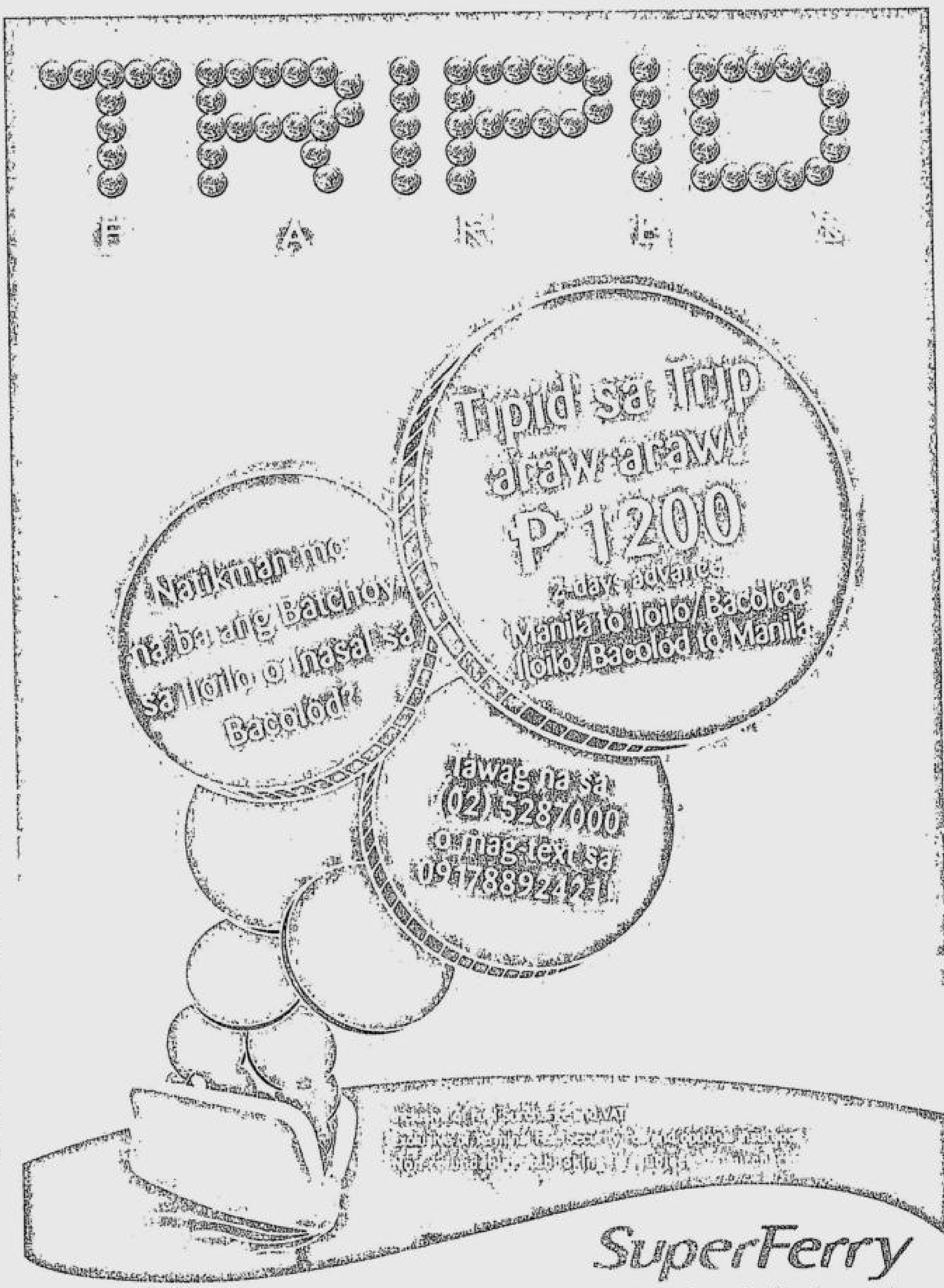
Palawan Bioenergy signed an agreement with China CAMC Co. Ltd for the establishment of a bioethanol plant in Palawan while One Cagayan inked a joint venture agreement with Nanning Yongkai Industry Group.

Philippine Marine Technology entered into a joint venture agreement on fisheries with Shandong Gaolu Co. Ltd., while Philippine China Fisheries Consortium forged a deal with Xunshan Fishery Co. Ltd. on the breeding of grouper and other species.

Yap said the Department of Agriculture merely witnessed the signing of the agreements.

A broad alliance of agrarian reform and peasant advocates, including Peace, had also raised concerns over three major RP-China agreements that open up 1.2-million hectares of land to agribusiness.

The agreements involve the development of 1 million-ha of land for hybrid corn, hybrid rice and hybrid sorghum farming; another 200,000-ha for agri-tourism and organic farming, and another 40,000-ha for sugarcane and cassava production.



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Skills-based migration to US will hurt Asians

WASHINGTON—ASIAN FAMILY values will be challenged under a sweeping US immigration reform plan that would grant visas based on skills more than on family connections in the United States.

While the plan would offer a path to citizenship for 12 million undocumented immigrants, it will crumble the bedrock underlying four decades of US immigration policy that is specially important to Asian Americans: Family reunification.

Congress is to consider this week reforms such as ending the issuance of US permanent resident cards to siblings and adult children of US citizens and holders of "green cards."

The new system calls for most green cards to be given based on a merit system that would favor applicants who speak English, have higher education and specific job skills.

Inconsistent with values

Trading off family reunification for employment-based visas is seen as inconsistent with US values and with Asia's extended family system, Asian experts say.

"In an era of promoting family values, proposals to eliminate family immigration categories seem entirely out of step," said Bill Ong Hing, a professor of Asian American studies at the University of California, Davis.

"What's the message? Brothers and sisters are not important? Once children reach a certain age, they need not bond with their parents? Eliminating such categories institutionalizes an antifamily message," Hing told a recent Congressional hearing.

Immigration has become a divisive issue in the US, and shifting the basis of immigration policy from family to skills is seen as a last-ditch bid to woo some conservatives opposed to President George W. Bush's legalization plans for 12 million undocumented immigrants in the country.

The new reform proposal "would undermine this nation's long tradition of family-based immigration," warned Japanese-American lawmaker Mike Honda, who chairs the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus.

Undocumented

The Democratic lawmaker said a merit-based immigration system would fail to adequately account for the economic contributions made by family members, who rely on one another to start and run businesses, purchase homes and send children to college.

They also provide care for young children, the sick and elderly, he said.

Honda believes about 1.5 million of the 14 million Asians in the United States are undocumented, including some who were victimized by immigration fraud.

Another 1.5 million Asians are in the backlog of applications for permanent residency status or citizenship, advocacy groups say.

Waiting lines to receive green cards under the various family categories extend more than a decade for relatives from China and India, and as long as two decades and more from the Philippines.

Under the proposed reforms, the cut-off date for green card applications on the basis of family ties was March 2005.

Applications made after that date would be rejected, dealing a blow to those "who had played by the rules and are now being told it is not good enough," lamented a lawyer for an Asian advocacy group.

Limited number of visas

While the planned reforms would not eliminate the ability of US citizens and permanent residents to sponsor their spouses and minor children, it does set "an arbitrary and unrealistic cap" on the number of visas available for US citizens to bring in their parents, said the Asian American Justice Center, a national civil rights organization.

An estimated 90,000 visas per year will be cut to 40,000, it said.

"This proposal compromises the ability of millions of American citizens to reunite with their adult children and siblings and will undermine the most important ingredient in creating healthy communities," said Gen Fujioka, program director for the Asian Law Caucus in San Francisco.

"Families are the source of our social, cultural and economic vitality. The proposal makes it more difficult for talented and hardworking immigrants to put down roots in the United States," he said.

Asians now comprise 5 percent of the US population and their 3.2-percent 2005-06 growth rivals Hispanics' 3.4-percent growth, the highest of any race group. *AFP*

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Tokyo, Japan

ISSN 0116-2642
INQUIRER
Vol. 22 No. 162

OPINION

Email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph Website: www.inquirer.net/opinion
Text us your feedback: inquirer opi name/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

THE PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER, INC. has its business and editorial offices at
•Chino Roces Ave corner Yague and Mascardo Sts., Makati City
•P.O. Box 2353 Makati Central Post Office 1263 Makati City
•Our telephone numbers are 897-8808 connecting all departments
•Editorial Fax 897-4793 / 897-4794 •Advertising 897-4807
•Circulation 527-3342 / 527-3348 / 528-0183 / 528-0186 and 528-0213 / Fax: 528-02-34.
•Subscription Hotline 896-6000
•100% soy ink•

Opposite of everything

EDITORIAL

WITHOUT A DOUBT, THE MOST DRAMATIC race of the 2007 mid-term elections was the three-way fight for governor of the vote-rich Central Luzon province of Pampanga. Fr. Ed Panlilio edged Lilia Pineda by only 1,147 votes—not even one-fifth of one percent of the total number of votes cast for governor. Years from now, his victory and, much more important, his grand adventure of a campaign, will continue to be studied again and again, for whatever political lessons it may yield.

There were, of course, other dramatic contests, involving higher-profile candidates. In General Santos City, the most popular Filipino alive challenged one of the young leaders of the opposition. But Manny Pacquiao, the world's best fighter, pound for pound, was outclassed by Darlene Antonino-Custodio, a dynast with both a track record of public service and a political machine.

In Batangas, the contest for governor was made for the movies, with the lead role played, fittingly enough, by a real movie star. The victory of three-term Lipa mayor Vilma Santos had everything: early setbacks, a long record of achievement and, in the person of alleged *jueteng* lord and incumbent governor Armand Sanchez, even a recognizable villain.

In Naga City, the villains were a motley crowd, but in the end the five-term mayor, Jesse Robredo, a Magsaysay awardee for government service, won a sixth term by a landslide, despite the best efforts of his opposition to strip him of office and even his Filipino nationality.

But it was in the President's home province of Pampanga where the best of the many good fights of the 2007 midterms took place. Until just before the deadline for the filing of certificates of candidacy for local positions last March, the contest for governor had been shaping up as a duel between two factions of the Arroyo administration. Gov. Mark Lapid, the son of the movie actor and first-term senator Lito Lapid, was running for reelection with the help of the dominant Lakas party. Provincial Board Member Lilia "Baby" Pineda, the wife of suspected jueteng lord Bong Pineda, was aiming for higher office with the help of the President's once and future party, Kampi.

It was a choice between what some members of the media took to calling the jueteng queen (because of her husband's largesse, Pineda is a major influence in Pampanga and regional politics) and the quarry prince (the king being Senator Lapid, alleged to have made a private fortune in public quarrying fees when he was still provincial governor).

Enter the man known in Pampanga as "Among Ed." Catholic priest Ed Panlilio was a reluctant candidate; indeed, he was heavily involved in a third-party search for an alternative candidate for governor. None of the more prominent Kapampangan citizens asked to run could reply in the affirmative, however. This was just as well; we strongly doubt that any of the high-profile Kapampangans approached would have done as well as Panlilio, contrary to Lingayen-Dagupan Archbishop Oscar Cruz's easy assumption. Our skepticism does not signify a lack of trust in the possible alternatives; it is not a reflection on their qualifications or competencies either. Instead, it is based on our reading of the political dynamics in Pampanga.

The voters of Pampanga needed a clear moral alternative. Instead of a professional politician, they needed a political amateur. Instead of a candidate for whom political office would be a career reward, they needed a candidate for whom even the mere act of running for office would already involve a major sacrifice—in Panlilio's case, his essential identity as a priest. Instead of a candidate with access to millions of pesos, they needed a candidate without any funds—indeed, in Panlilio's case, without any political organization or campaign network to speak of. Not least, the voters of Pampanga needed someone who was clearly not beholden to vested interests, whether it be the continuing patronage of the illegal numbers game or the tradition of entitlement that had the provincial capitol in its grip.

They needed the complete opposite of the politics of opportunity that both Pineda and Lapid had come to symbolize. With Among Ed, that is exactly what the Kapampangans got.

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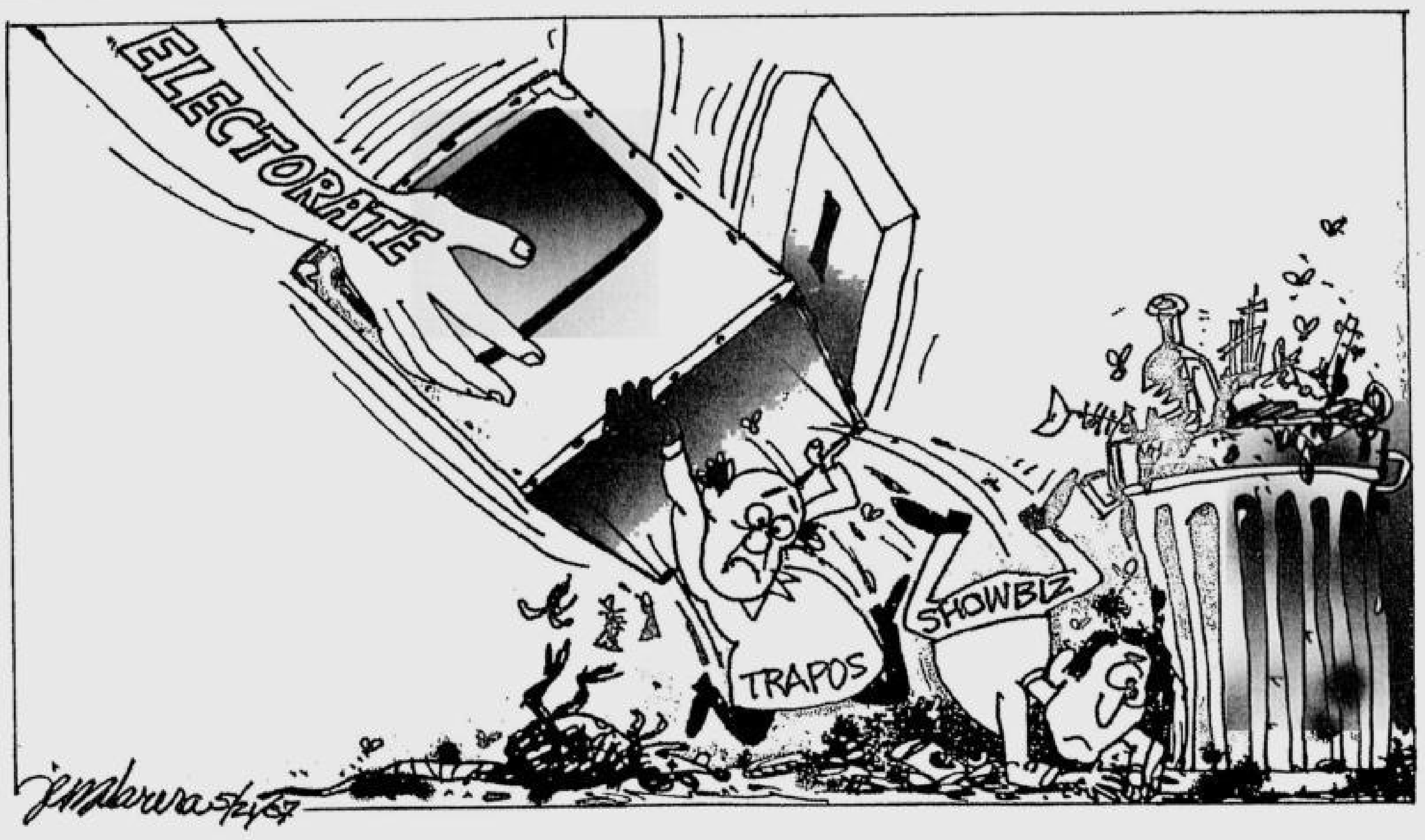

Another power rate increase coming up

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

LIKE IT OR NOT, MINDANAO WILL ALWAYS be an important part of Philippine election history. It was there where the dead rose from their graves to vote; it was also there where the birds and the bees voted. And it was there where Garci received his Hello Garci call from Malacañang and where he weaved his magic to make Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo win in the 2004 elections. Now it is again in the limelight because of the "election that never was" in Maguindanao, where administration senatorial candidates scored a 12-0 win against the opposition, a feat that's even harder to achieve than winning in the lotto.

Maguindanao is not a small town; it is a whole province with around 300,000 voters. Achieving a 12-0 score in one whole province is what the Supreme Court would call a "statistical improbability." What's more, the topnotcher there is Chavit Singson, someone from Ilocos Sur which is at the extreme northern edge of the Philippines, very far from Maguindanao. What is even more strange, Maguindanao is a Muslim province, but Jamalul Kiram, the only Muslim candidate in the Team Unity slate, finished last in the province's Magic 12.

To all these suspicious goings-on, the answer of Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos was, "Show proof." To anybody else but the Comelec commissioners, this case deserves an investigation—to make sure that cheating has not once again reared its ugly head in Mindanao. The Comelec does not need a complaint or proof to start an investigation. It is its duty to look into it and gather proof. That is the least thing it should do to recover its credibility.

* * *

But here is more bad news: Electricity rates in Metro Manila will increase again soon. The reason is the high prices being traded at the Wholesale Electricity Spot Market (WESM).

Because of the low availability of power plants running on cheaper fuel such as coal and geothermal energy, power rates at the WESM during the April billing cycle soared by P2 per kWh, to P8 per kWh from P5.936 per kWh in March.

The impact of the drastic rise in the WESM prices on the four million Meralco customers was calculated to be at 50 centavos per kWh, to be lumped as a component of its generation charge.

Since there is a regulatory lag, the pass-on of this increase will be deferred until such time that the Energy Regulatory Commission approves the Meralco application. But just the same, it will eventually shock consumers when they receive their electricity bills.

This is the third unusual price increase since the electricity spot market opened last year. And we are again witnessing the evil hand of the mafia in the National Power Corp.

How did Napocor do it? Recently, Napocor induced a fuel supply shortage by importing a small supply of high-priced coal so that power plants can operate only at a minimum. Now it is telling us there is sufficient power supply but the truth is we are experiencing brownouts.

Greed is the only reason why some Napocor officials are inducing these brownouts. They do not want the power plants owned by Napocor to be privatized, after all they are benefiting from fuel concessions and from supply and management contracts; so they are creating a fake power crisis.

This is advantageous to the Napocor mafia because of the commissions from the emergency purchases of high-priced coal. Needless to say, it is the consumers who will have to pay for them.

The WESM operates like the stock exchange where buyers of electricity try to get the best possible price from the available sellers which, incidentally, are still dominated by Napocor.

It is high time for the President to take drastic action to prevent the anticipated increase in power rates because of the collusion among industry players, notably Napocor and the Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp. (PSALM). She should dismantle the Napocor mafia.

* * *

Before the elections, the Bicol region was so battered by intermittent brownouts, that Sen. Joker Arroyo skipped a campaign sortie to discuss with President Macapagal-Arroyo the problem. Guess who was absent at that meeting? GMA had told Napocor chief Cyril del Callar to be there but during the meeting, Del Callar was "nowhere to be found," Senator Arroyo said. "So the President had to relay her order to another Napocor official to fix the problem immediately."

Del Callar is the only official in government who can snub the President in a meeting called to discuss a problem where his "expertise" is needed.

Arroyo had assailed officials of Napocor and the National Transmission Corp. (Transco) over the brownouts in Bicol which has at least two geothermal power plants. The two government corporations claimed the power outages were due to six yet-to-be repaired steel towers along the Tayabas-Naga stretch, which were damaged by typhoons "Milenyo" and "Reming" last year.

But it has been more than six months since the typhoons hit the area and the power firms should have been able to repair them by now, Arroyo said.

"Why did Transco not repair them immediately after the typhoon?" he asked.

The senator has asked the Joint Congressional Power Commission (JCPC) to summon officials of Transco and Napocor to an investigation after the elections. The panel is co-headed by Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago and Rep. Alipio Badelles.

He pointed out that executives of the two firms had given their assurance that there would be no power interruptions, that there was no cause to worry because we had "excess power."

"They said we are paying independent power producers for power that we do not use. So there is excess power. So why are there brownouts?" Arroyo asked.

Mother of miracles

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

I TOO HAD MY DOUBTS, LIKE THOMAS. Though in my case I had ample reason for it, which was what my friends who had been campaigning indefatigably for Eddie Panlilio had been telling me. As election day neared last week, they said they were afraid of a couple of things.

One was vote-buying or violence or massive cheating. They could count only on the Lord to protect them, the other camps could count on gambling lords and lords of manors in Pampanga to do so. They repeatedly warned the voters of Pampanga and the nation at large, through the media, about that possibility and begged them to hold fast and be vigilant. But given that there is no ironclad way to stop cheating in this country, especially in GMA's bailiwick, even the most secular among them turned to prayer. There are no atheists in the trenches, and the trenches were where my friends found themselves in shortly before last Monday, listening to the wind whistling in the night, awaiting the enemy assault at dawn.

Two was that the upheaval might prove to be a middle-class phenomenon. The *masa* might be content to go their merry way, accepting badly needed donations to their desperate cause, however those donations came few and far between, and to be herded into the Lapid and Pineda corrals. This was after all, Pampanga, a province that has been devastated several times over, not least by a violent volcanic eruption and an even more violent aftermath in the form of lahar. It has also been devastated by being associated with someone in Malacañang who should not be there, but that has been more a devastation to the nation than to Pampanga. Indeed, my friends worried that the folk there might think Lapid and Pineda might be SOBs but they were their SOBs. The two had a pipeline to Malacañang, a source of boon and beneficence, even if more advertised than delivered.

But, lo and behold, the folk of Pampanga, rich, middle class and poor did hold fast, and the result was a stunning, luminous and awe-inspiring victory for Panlilio. Of course, he won by the slimmest of margins over his opponents—a victory bound to be contested by them over the next several weeks. But public pressure, for all that it's worth—bolstered by the Edsa-like celebratory exuberance in the province over Panlilio's victory—will be against them. I am tempted to say I am jubilant that even the poor of Pampanga decided to vote with their hearts and minds rather than with their mouths and bellies, but I've never been convinced that it's the poor who are easy prey to vote-buying. The rich and middle class seem to me to be far more so. But that's another story. Suffice it for me here to congratulate all the folk of Pampanga for the miracle they have wrought.

That, not quite incidentally, is something we owe completely to them and not to Malacañang. The reason I say this is that someone told me recently that Malacañang had a win-win situation in Pampanga. If either Lapid or Pineda won, then GMA has a protégé there to do her bidding. If, by some miracle, Panlilio did, then she could always claim that, contrary to the opposition and to the universal disbelief over the even more miraculous results in Maguindanao, the elections have generally been fair and clean.

No, we do not owe Panlilio's victory to Malacañang or to clean elections. We owe that to the Kapampangans and their fortitude. It's like press freedom: if we still have it, it is not because of Malacañang's benevolence or enlightened ways. It is because journalists are still willing to defend their rights. Panlilio has won in spite of Malacañang, not because of it.

I can only hope, as I said the last time, that Panlilio's success does not spawn a massive foray by the clergy into elections. That was what happened to entertainers in the wake of Erap's victories. I wouldn't put it past many priests to contemplate an alternative or parallel career as politician, if only to be able to sexually harass constituents apart from parishioners. But heaven forbid some of them do become governors and congressmen, especially the bishops who justified GMA being there by saying everyone cheats anyway.

But the more important consideration is: Can this example be replicated elsewhere?

Yes, but only—and I can never sufficiently belabor this point—if the nation at large can conjure a storyline of Good vs. Evil. That is what the contest in Pampanga has been—Good vs. Evil. That is what the two Edsas have been—Good vs. Evil. Our problem today isn't just a political one, it's a moral one. But unlike Pampanga, the rest of the nation hasn't been offered a stark, earth-shaking, larger-than-life choice between Good and Evil, it has only been offered a choice between Evil and Lesser Evil. You cannot drive people out into the streets with that kind of choice. You cannot create People Power, provincial or national, with that kind of choice.

What that means in practical terms is that it's time the choice stopped being between GMA or Erap, or their proxies. It's time a truly new force emerged, or we created one, that is the opposite of GMA—the way Cory was the opposite of Marcos and the people pushing for impeachment were the opposite of Erap. The way Panlilio is the opposite of Lapid and Pineda. That is the only way by which what happened in Pampanga can happen elsewhere.

Now more than ever. I stand fast by my belief that the next three years will be some of the most turbulent in our country's history. Things will get worse before they get better. But as Pampanga shows, or indeed as the incidences of People Power in this country shows, Filipinos somehow manage to discover their loftiest selves during their lowest moments.

Necessity is the father of invention. Desperation is the mother of miracles.

Surviving the bend in the road

COMMENTARY

Asuncion David Maramba

"THE PESO WILL CONTINUE TO RISE AGAINST the dollar, the economic outlook will continue to look good, the country will survive—regardless of who gets elected and even if the government or the politicians are corrupt." That was one of the most depressing comments I heard before the elections.

The good new is it may be true. We will survive. Never mind if it means that our government, as some political pundits see it, is already nonfunctioning here and there—a "soft state" like a heart with some life-threatening, blocked valves. Whatever happened to Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's dream of a "strong republic"?

We have been known to take care of ourselves through "400 years in the convent, 40 years in Hollywood," three years of Japanese occupation, 20 years under the Marcos dictatorship, with spots and seasons of restiveness. Those episodes did dovetail into bloody or peaceful revolutions of the finest kind. The point is, before their breaking points, we managed to live on. Filipino instincts for survival are among the sturdiest in the world.

Business is known to survive any system for indefinite lengths of time. The hardworking middle class will insist on normalcy till it hurts. The rich will survive in their gated enclaves, high-rise condos and ersatz San Francisco-Swiss-Mediterranean getaways.

The bad news is that our 50 percent to 60 percent or roughly 40 million to 50 million of poor Filipinos, those on or below the poverty line (higher or lower depending on the source) will barely survive, if at all. The need for food, water, clean air will press on the environment and squeeze our resources dry. The unschooled will die barely schooled. The unattended sick will be ever among us. Parts of the city are buried in garbage. Have you ever wondered where it all goes? Skilled workers and professional middle class are migrating. Cry not for a calamitous demographic profile. It's already here.

Juan and Juana will be at the mercy of a spiritless bureaucracy. Why bother being efficient downstairs when milk and honey and money flow upstairs? Before the elections, I called the office of the Commission on Elections in Parañaque. I was successively transferred to three persons who did not know where the votes go from the precinct "*kasi ho, bago lang ako.*" Unbelievable!

Already, an ominous 119 families, only, rule Philippine politics. Political dynasties are planting stakes all over our land. Soon, feudalism with lords of the manor and serfs will again dominate the landscape.

Roads, Gawad Kalinga homes, jobs, schools may increase arithmetically; but our "galloping" population, health, housing and job needs, etc. increase geometrically. Will we ever make it? Education Secretary Jesli Lapus said, "Every 10 minutes, I am one classroom short."

Charitable works will tirelessly keep on trying to bridge the gap. But what if the gap is moving apart faster than the bridges can connect? At our place in the barrio, my very generous doctor-cousins (who provide direct service and most of the logistics), a doctor-niece, her two dentist friends, volunteer doctors, the local Catholic Womens' League and young people we help through school, mount a yearly medical mission. The cabanas fill up with patients, with easily 50-60 teeth pulled in two hours. It's charity at its best with free consultations and free medicine alleviating the moment.

But under the circumstances, can one tooth be saved? Can there be any follow-up of ailments? Justice demands equitable government service that can provide a continuing clinic which is what such communities need.

I have been harping on the superior call of justice over charity in times like these. This means a reform of unjust structures, systems and attitudes. That is why I cannot believe that the country will survive even if the politicians keep the government system rotten.

Let me end with the Parable of the Bend in the Road from World Mission Magazine (which every priest and seminarian should read). I have mentioned this in a previous column on the need for pressing toward "works of justice." For all those who asked me what the parable was, here it is.

There was once a farming town. When you came into the town, the main road narrowed into a very bad bend. As more people in the town bought cars and traffic increased, this bend came to be an accident black spot. At the local church on Sundays, the priest often preached about the Good Samaritan. He usually congratulated the people on their fine Christian spirit in helping to get accident victims to the hospital, by phoning for an ambulance or by using their own cars. Then, one day, a member of the local council suggested widening the road and removing the bend. However, the town mayor had a market farm just where the bend in the road occurred. He had the finest tomatoes, strawberries and vegetables. The council man suggested to the priest that he have a word with the mayor about it. But the priest and most people figured that they had better stay out of politics. So the following Sunday, the priest again preached on the Good Samaritan and encouraged the people to continue their fine work of picking up accident victims and getting them to the hospital.

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Voting for consequence

KRIS-CROSSING MINDANAO

Antonio J. Montalvan II

"HOW MUCH IS THE CANDIDATE GIVING?" A student of mine asked when I tried to do some persuading for a certain candidate. The tenor of the question made me understand immediately that this was a case of "if the price is right." So I asked how much the other camp was giving. A thousand pesos, my student said. So much for persuasion.

Midday of May 14, a colleague doing the rounds of precincts to monitor the conduct of the elections sent me a text message. Hot on the track of a bagman of a particular candidate, he and company ended up at the payoff site itself—a private residence in a poor neighborhood in an urban area, where voters were streaming in and out. The candidate was said to be a wedding godson of a Malacañang official.

Before our wimp of an electoral system disenfranchises voters, it is the voters who disenfranchise themselves—voluntarily. Many have yet to see the significance of having their voices heard. They do not care that a single vote—their's maybe—can possibly cause a ripple in the nation's political pond. The vote we sell today will be the seed of many votes for sale in the future markets of our consumerist elections.

These are times of extreme poverty; it is only right that voters from marginal communities accept the candidates' "payoff," which rightly belongs to the voters anyway, some would argue. The common cry in "Binisaya" is: *Dawat kwarta, botar konsyensya* (Accept the money, vote according to your conscience).

But before we change the laws of morality, hold it right there, counseled a priest in his homily the Sunday before election day. The two of you are fooling each other, the priest continued; you, by being dishonest with your promise to vote, the other by buying your integrity.

Indeed, many of us do not care where our votes lead. A week before May 14, as we were deliberating on a list of candidates that we thought of recommending to voters, based on a set of clear criteria, a name cropped up. No one had bothered to check more deeply into this candidate's background. Not until someone in the group asked: What does he do in his spare time? He plays mahjong, another one answered. There was silence. If the candidate can gamble with his own money, will he not do the same with money entrusted to him by the people?

The callousness of it all is not just in the act of selling our votes as it is in choosing the "lesser evil." The case in point, to my mind, was the man of the hour himself, the candidate from Bukidnon who calls himself "Garci." Of course, Garci being a favorite whipping boy of national media, it was no surprise that the first congressional district of Bukidnon where he ran was the focus of Manila media, many of which sent their television crews to faraway Lingating in landlocked Baungon, Bukidnon, the better for a sensational footage in the ratings war.

But who was Garci up against? A family that plays behind a veneer of popular "advocacy," yet is building its own dynastic power base: mother for mayor, brother-congressman for governor, sister for Congress to succeed brother. And there is no outrage among the media people and the progressive street marchers over the the Binays of Makati. Is "dynastism" a lesser evil? Probably not when we think of the consequences. Probably not when we think of the recent Marcos past that we have now forgotten in our short memories. Or have we forgotten that "agit-prop" called "bureaucrat capitalism"?

Probably, also not when we think of this text message sent by a friend the week before the elections: "Pia Cayetano gets P200 million per year of pork; plus P200 million if Alan Peter wins, plus P70 million if his wife (wins a seat in the House of Representatives). *Ang swerte ng* dynasty *nila*! Same with Pimentel. Don't vote for them."

Yes, *swerte*, because some dynasties are indeed better than others. Well, we never thought of it that way—because in our anti-Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo fixation we think they are the lesser evil. But no, you do not fight evil by using the hammer of evil. You fight against evil by fighting for the common good, a standard that we hardly see. What I would want the Macapagal-Arroyo dynasty to do—that is, to stop fielding more political heirs into the political arena—I also want the other dynastic clans and their own Little Lord Fauntleroys to do. The evil nature of political dynasties does not become "lesser" when the dynasts are families other than the Arroyos. The evil is as repulsive and sickening to a nation already made retardate by the few families that keep their stranglehold on political power.

On the eve of the canvassing, when tired public school teachers started delivering the ballot boxes and election returns to canvassing sites, I saw mayhem. There was no order, no system, no clear instructions to secure what the teachers were submitting.

Here was something that was sacred, the election return, which could have been easily switched without our noticing it. Ongoing just meters away from the din of the restive teachers jostling their way to the delivery table was a computerized vote count. This was being spearheaded by the local political lord inside the city hall that he treats as his enclave. And he was using his own party's unofficial vote tallies, unauthorized by the Comelec. And the vote count was being conducted in secrecy—perhaps for reasons that the results of the vote count could easily be used for "other" purposes.

A nation that does not look far into the consequences of its vote is a nation that is on its death throes. Last week's elections simply put the finishing touches to a tombstone.

* * *

Comments to monta@cu-cdo.edu.ph

Machinery gave up the ghost

THE LONG VIEW

Manuel L. Quezon III

REGARDLESS OF HOW THE OFFICIAL COUNTing turns out, the battle for a favorable public perception of the elections has been lost—by the Palace and by the Commission on Elections. Whether or not the Palace manages to eke out a "victory" by squeezing in additional Team Unity names into the Magic 12, only two of its senatorial candidates can claim an indubitable mandate. And the probable victory of those two, Joker Arroyo and Edgardo Angara, despite their affiliation with the administration, is a personal vindication, a public endorsement of their ultimate political independence.

Going into the elections, the Palace thundered that its machinery would win the day; but after election day, it's been obvious that the machinery broke down. I asked a former campaign operative about this breakdown. He said:

Even in areas where local administration candidates didn't face opposition rivals, they faced competition from parties affiliated with the ruling coalition: Kampi vs. Lakas, for example. This ate up resources and kept administration candidates from focusing on the national race (which local candidates hardly ever do, anyway, once the campaign period for local races begins).

And even if they had an easy time, administration-affiliated local candidates and their leaders knew the public pulse in their areas intimately. They knew the national mood, which is anti-administration. They knew that in local areas, the national mood is strongly felt. They knew better than to squander their authority and resources by insisting that the local electorate support an unwinnable administration senatorial slate.

And so they went through the motions, taking the Palace's money and telling the people to vote Team Unity—though knowing full well that the voters would do otherwise. In other words, local leader after local leader knew, going into this year's elections, that in national terms, the public mood was anti-administration, but they weren't about to tell the Palace that, as no one wanted to be the bearer of bad news. Furthermore, to say so would have simply prompted the administration to divert resources to some other local leader willing to pander to the Palace's expectations.

So they took the money, went through the motions, but didn't pressure their electorates to toe the Palace line. These local leaders weren't about to stick their necks out to gratify the Palace or alienate their followers. They concentrated on the election of their local candidates affiliated with the administration. And the electorates, especially in areas uncontested by the opposition, pragmatically went along with them, too. Why bother irritating the Palace or risking patronage over the next three years?

So the Palace proclaimed it would be 12-0; they told the local leaders, deliver; the leaders said, we would deliver, even though they knew they couldn't—but no one would admit to the impossible, so they all went through the motions, fulfilling their obligations—but not risking their leadership—just to please the Palace.

The unsung hero here is Sergio Osmeña III, the campaign head of the Genuine Opposition who saw how the political landscape had changed, who marshaled the means to feel the public pulse, and thus identified the messages that resonated with the electorate. He met with skepticism and hostility from old-time operators, who resented his scientific approach to mounting a national campaign, his focusing on surveys and focus groups to see how the public really felt, what messages really mattered and what tactics gave the most bang for the buck.

He scrapped rallies, took a dim view of motorcades, focused on commercials and the tried-and-tested message of midterms: a vote for the opposition is a vote against the incumbent. Local voters could vote in Lakas or Kampi, or NPC or whatever, on the basis of who built the local infrastructure and attended to constituents' needs; but local voters reserved their national votes to express their personal antipathies toward the administration; and in the case of candidates like Antonio Trillanes, their votes were very personal statements aimed at the Palace indeed.

As for the Comelec, it faced another kind of revolt from the ground. Media stood their ground, knowing full well the monkey business that took place in 2004, and so did organizations like Namfrel, under a new leadership eager to restore the organization's credibility. Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos proclaimed the voter turnout at 70 percent to 80 percent; Namfrel debunked it: the implications being obvious to everyone (recall how on the eve of elections Newsbreak had identified an inflated official voter turnout figure as a camouflage for vote-padding). In Maguindanao, Namfrel volunteers refused to be kept in the dark: a combination of volunteer and media vigilance suddenly made it very much harder to cheat in Mindanao. And with local leaders in Luzon and the rest of the Visayas deciding not to bother enforcing an unpopular administration Senate slate, by all accounts, Cebu was left as the last bastion of "Garcification." But even there, enough Cebuanos seem to have voted independently to moderate the influence the province's votes might have on the national results. Which is not to say last-minute miracles of a sinister sort won't be achieved for otherwise failed candidates like Mike Defensor, Prospero Pichay or even Miguel Zubiri. But their victory will always be tempered by public doubts.

When even a Palace booster like Tony Lopez states, without mincing words, that the President was subjected to a referendum and suffered a resounding defeat, the extent of the administration debacle is beyond debate. The President has two years left to try to govern, and maybe even less: for the 2010 race has begun—and she isn't a candidate.

After half a century, we still have Namfrel

REVEILLE

Ramon J. Farolan

AS FAR AS THE ELECTORAL PROCESS GOES, WE DON'T seem to have made much progress over the years. The latest exercise was, for all practical purposes, a repeat of what has always taken place in Philippine politics since the grant of independence in 1946.

If we review the news clippings of most of our elections in the past, we might just as well forget about the dates: the issues in previous elections are the same issues that we read about today. The most common terms in our election vocabulary remain the three G's—guns, goons, and gold. In the past, a fourth was added when it was reported that in a remote town in Northern Luzon, all the cabaret girls were taken on a *pakyaw* basis in order to entertain barangay captains, leaving no lady available for the regular clients of the establishment. In recent years, the fourth "G" stood for Garci, the most infamous phone pal in Philippine politics.

Ballot box snatching, massive vote buying, tampering of ballots, stuffing of ballot boxes, anomalous counting of votes, confusion in locating one's name in the precinct list, and of course, rival candidates shooting it out during campaign rallies—these have all been part of the election scenario as far back as I can remember. You would think that experiencing these irregularities in two or three similar exercises, we would have been able to minimize, if not totally eradicate, most of them. But the truth is we appear to have continuously improved on electoral fraud operations with the introduction of *dagdag-bawas*.

Perhaps, the most telling point in the history of our elections is that we still have a National Citizens' Movement for Free Elections (Namfrel) which was organized more than 50 years ago to help ensure speed and accuracy in the counting of ballots.

Just a few notes on Namfrel.

I first heard about Namfrel as a high school student in the early '50s. It was 1951 and President Elpidio Quirino was halfway through his first term after being elected to the presidency in a heated battle against Jose P. Laurel, two years earlier. At that time, I had only the vaguest idea what Namfrel was all about and who was behind the organization.

It turned out that Namfrel was a creation of the US Central Intelligence Agency which was covertly involved in laying the groundwork for a Ramon Magsaysay candidacy against Quirino. The Americans believed that the Quirino administration was thoroughly corrupt and beyond salvation. They chose the Zambales congressman as their candidate for the 1953 presidential elections.

Ed Lansdale, a US Air Force lieutenant colonel, was assigned to the American embassy in Manila to manage the whole operation. Even the US ambassador had instructions to assist him without asking too many questions. One of Lansdale's associates in Manila was Gabriel Kaplan, a New York Republican lawyer and politician who ran for Congress and lost. Recruited by the CIA, Kaplan was sent to Manila where he started a community development project which had support from local US company executives.

After some time, Kaplan was able to get organizations like the chambers of commerce, Rotary clubs, veteran groups and similar associations under a nationwide umbrella group to support American objectives. This nationwide umbrella outfit was the Namfrel that had its baptism of fire in the 1951 midterm elections. Namfrel operations then was actually a warm-up for the presidential contest scheduled for 1953.

Joseph Smith, in his book "Portrait of a Cold Warrior" said, "Namfrel, ostensibly sponsored by these various civic groups, was actually run by Gabe Kaplan and funded by the CIA station. Namfrel chapters sprang up all around the country. They preached the virtues of ensuring there would be no tricks at the polls and showed the practical ways to prevent them. They taught people how to make thumbprints on ballots—the system used to verify registration certificates. Other people were taught photography and instructed to take pictures of all persons entering polling places in order to identify the squads of multi-voters (flying voters) that corrupt politicians used around town."

Magsaysay, the country's most beloved president, won by a landslide over Elpidio Quirino. In fairness to Quirino, he is considered one of the better presidents of the Philippines and a man of the highest integrity.

More than half a century has passed—minus the Marcos years which were devoid of free elections—and we still have an organization like Namfrel to baby-sit us through elections. That is a measure of how much we have failed to make any progress in the conduct of our electoral contests. We must come up with a Commission on Elections we can trust if we are to put Namfrel completely out of business. Incidentally, there are text messages circulating about Namfrel's trending of election results to favor the administration. Obviously, not everyone is comfortable with Namfrel.

Another indicator of how backward we have remained as far as election procedures are concerned is the "dirty finger." Until now, an indicator—not necessarily foolproof—that an individual has already voted is the dirty index finger of his right hand. I cannot help thinking—dirty finger, dirty politics.

Ultimate responsibility for the present state of affairs lies with President Macapagal-Arroyo. In 2001, she promised us, as part of her legacy to the nation, computerized elections. Under the leadership of Chairman Benjamin Abalos, instead of computerized elections, the Filipino people were taken for a ride to the tune of almost a billion pesos. Nothing happened in terms of punishing the culprits or recovering our money.

One last word about the recent polls. Violence continues to be part of our election process. In November 1996, we were in the United States on an election day. We stayed in San Francisco long enough to witness one of those wonders of the US electoral process. Voting started at six in the morning. By seven in the evening of the same day, Bob Dole, the Republican candidate was at his Washington headquarters before wildly cheering supporters to concede defeat and to thank everyone for their votes and their efforts in his behalf. The one remark which caught my attention was about his rival, President Bill Clinton. Dole said, "Clinton was my opponent, never my enemy."

If one day our politicians will look upon their rivals as opponents rather than as enemies, then perhaps, we shall yet have peaceful elections in our country.

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LETTERS

Pacman's fall: writing on wall

DARLENE MAGNOLIA ANTONINO-CUSTODIO knocked out Pacquiao all right, but it was not so much because of the well-oiled Antonino machinery. Neither was it because of the rag-tag machinery of former Mayor Rosalita Nuñez.

The choice made by the people of General Santos City and the first congressional district of South Cotabato was in itself a statement of dissatisfaction and disillusionment with President Macapagal-Arroyo and whoever associates with her. Any person observant enough would notice that the Team Unity candidates who managed to squeeze into the Magic 12 are those with b—ls, big enough to stand up to the powerful tenant of Malacañang whenever people's rights are trampled upon, laws are mocked, democratic institutions fall prey to utilitarianism and the very sacred fabric of democracy is fashioned and refashioned according to the whims and caprices of the very people who are sworn to defend and preserve it.

Of course, Pacquiao's woes sprung not just from his friendship with GMA and her equally callous drumbeaters. The whole world saw how Pacquiao fumbled and stumbled in the political arena. Both friends and foes saw him trusting too much those whom only the devil can love and respect.

However, had Pacquiao opted to go with the good guys, things might have been different. Heroes may be made inside boxing rings. But heroes are also made in the halls of Congress. The average Filipino hardly sees the difference. Both are battlegrounds where matches are won and lost.

But what counts most is how the people of General Santos City and the first congressional district of South Cotabato fulfilled their destiny by writing on the wall a message which GMA must read and understand: GMA, too, has a destiny to fulfill before she herself gets knocked off the pedestal of sand on which she thinks she rules supreme over a nation of idiots.

—MARK CARLO G. MEDALLA,
35 Zapote St., General Santos City

Election day turned into 'Litterbugs Day' by candidates

LITTERING WAS THE MOST visible sin against the environment on election day. Sample ballots were being scattered everywhere (in the guise of being distributed) with total abandon. It was definitely a feast day for litterbugs.

The practice must be stopped. It also does not reflect at all our yearning for clean elections.

Political parties, candidates and their supporters should take responsibility for any litter coming from their camps. Sample ballots cost a lot of money and whittle down our forests. They must be used sparingly and judiciously, and volunteers tasked to distribute them should be instructed to make sure they are not strewn about mindlessly.

To lessen the demand for sample ballots and thus minimize littering on election day, why don't we, voters, prepare our own list of candidates before going to the voting precincts?

We should carefully put together our list of candidates, keeping in mind the need to select those genuinely committed to serving the needs of our communities, including protecting our environment.

Putting up a convenient system for the management of biodegradable and non-biodegradable waste right at polling places will also help in ensuring litter-free elections.

—REI PANALIGAN,
coordinator, EcoWaste Coalition,
ecowastecoalition@yahoo.com

Questionable ruling on SMC shares

THIS IS IN REACTION TO THE NEWS article "Sandiganbayan lets Danding sell disputed P6B SMC shares." (INQUIRER, 5/12/07)

The Sandiganbayan ruling is not only questionable, it does the coconut farmers—who carried the burden of the coco levy imposition, the funds of which were used to buy the contested SMC shares—an injustice.

The public is very much aware that 47 percent of SMC shares were acquired using coco levy or public funds. The ownership of these SMC shares is still being contested because Eduardo Cojuangco claims 20 percent of those. And yet, even before the courts ruled on the ownership issue, here comes the Sandiganbayan allowing Cojuangco to sell the disputed shares so he can pay his P6-billion debt to UCPB. Is the court now saying that Cojuangco owns the SMC shares he claims?

In incurring the UCPB debt, Cojuangco used SMC shares as collateral. UCPB is a sequestered bank that was also put up using coco levy funds. By allowing the sale, the Sandiganbayan is practically permitting Cojuangco to pay off his loans without using his own money. In effect, government would be paying for the loans. How fortunate for Cojuangco but very unfortunate for the government and the coconut farmers. *"Parang ginigisa tayo sa sariling mantika."*

The timing of the ruling is also suspect; it was issued just before May 14, when public attention was focused on the elections, thus escaping public scrutiny. And this seems to be the case, because, so far, only the Office of the Solicitor General (OSG) and coconut farmers' organizations are raising a howl against it.

Then again, the Sandiganbayan ruling might also have something to do with Malacañang's plan to enter into a compromise agreement with Cojuangco. After the demise of PCGG Commissioner Haydee Yorac, who vigorously pursued the cases against Cojuangco, the Arroyo administration has practically reversed course.

Instead of ruling on the petition of Cojuangco, the Sandiganbayan should have ruled on the writ of execution filed in pursuance of earlier rulings on the ownership of the UCPB and the 27 percent SMC shares, which have been declared to be owned by the government and held in trust for the small coconut farmers. By acting on the writ, the Sandiganbayan would have freed much needed funds for the rehabilitation and development of the coconut industry, one of the major export earners.

We are hoping that the OSG will immediately file an opposition to this questionable Sandiganbayan ruling.

—OMI C. ROYANDOYAN,
executive director, Centro Saka Inc.,
centrosaka@yahoo.com

An awakening inspired by Helen Quach

IN REFERENCE TO CERES P. DOYO'S APRIL 26 column, I played with symphony conductor Helen Quach and the Manila Symphony Orchestra (MSO) 30 odd years ago. As a student, I sat on the fringes of the outer 1st violin section and found out that great things can come out of a small frame. Yes, Helen can turn the MSO into a great sounding force which only a person of great spiritual and musical understanding can. Unfortunately I was not in Manila to experience last April's concerts. I would have been willing to sit in the back desk and play for her.

I finally caught up with Helen in Sydney while on tour with my orchestra, The Australian Philharmonic Orchestra, last May 5. Our conversation took longer than I anticipated and we ended up talking for three hours about everything under the sun. Energy and stamina radiated from her. I was too tired after my first concert the night before and she dragged me out of bed, so to speak, and woke me up to the world. I was amazed at her philosophy which, at that time of day, was far too complicated for me. But as our conversation went deeper and deeper, I began to wake up to finally see what this lady is made of.

There were things that I would have given up had I gone through what she had. No, not Helen; she has the fighting spirit of a bull terrier. We talked the "conductor talk" and it was fun. Also about our weaknesses and strengths and how we go about finding the right medium to bring out something from nothing. Then we talked about dogs, cars, orchestras, then the world. Time stopped. I had to bid her goodbye as I had a meeting with my principal players.

After 30 years, that was the only time I found out who Helen Quach really was. I was inspired to do another concert. I had become far too complacent—same routine different venue—but mind you, she has shown me something different in what seems to be a merry-go-round of performances.

Bravo Helen!

—JULIAN QUIRIT,
resident conductor/concertmaster,
Australian Philharmonic Orchestra, and
professor/lecturer, Monash and
Melbourne Universities

SC also to blame for extrajudicial killings

PLEASE ALLOW ME TO EXPRESS MY VIEWS on Supreme Court Chief Justice Reynato Puno's statements blaming the US war on terrorism for the human rights violations in the Philippines. (INQUIRER, 4/23/07)

The most senior official of the Philippine justice system made those foolish and disoriented statements to escape culpability in the violations of human rights, particularly the spate of extrajudicial killings, committed in the country.

More than the war on terror, the slow and faulty dispensation of justice in the country and the Supreme Court's bias against the poor and underprivileged leave the people with no option but to take extralegal shortcuts to attain justice for themselves. Extrajudicial killings persist because cases filed against the suspects remain unresolved and the murderers stay unpunished.

I can empathize with the relatives of the victims of the CPP/NPA mass killings in Inopacan, Leyte, after the Supreme Court granted temporary liberty to erstwhile communist leader Satur Ocampo, despite the fact that the crime (mass murder) he is accused of is unbailable. Where do we go to for recourse if our own justice system fails us?

The war against terrorism provides the ordinary citizens of this country with a sense of security and peace of mind. Prudence dictates that the Chief Justice should also wage war against criminals so that he can give us a sense of justice.

—MAXIMO A BANTUGON JR.,
maxbantugon@yahoo.com

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Protests mar Comelec count results

LOCAL CANDIDATES IN SOME AREAS IN PANgasinan, Bataan and Isabela are questioning the results of Commission on Elections canvassing, leading to the filing of charges and possible delay in the proclamation of the winners.

In Pangasinan, the daughter of socialite Rose Marie "Baby" Arenas won in the tightly fought congressional race in the third district.

Rachel Arenas, a candidate of the administration Lakas-CMD party, got a margin of 1,139 votes over her closest opponent, Generoso Tulagan Jr., son of outgoing Rep. Generoso Tulagan.

"I consider it a landslide victory, despite all the intimidation and harassment my supporters got, despite all the goons and the money," Arenas said.

But a lawyer of her other opponent, former Deputy Customs Commissioner Gallant Soriano, said his camp had reason to seriously doubt the results of the canvassing of votes, particularly in San Carlos City.

In a statement, Eric Lazo, Soriano's lawyer, said the "serious doubt" arose from several incidents of "terrorism, vote-buying, point shaving and bribery of election officers to ensure the victory of the winning candidate."

"We are considering all legal options so that the true will of the voters of the district would be respected and implemented," Lazo said.

He said Soriano's legal team had asked the city board of canvassers to defer the issuance and sending of the certificate of canvass to the provincial board of canvassers because of alleged huge discrepancies between their tally and the final one.

Lazo said that in Malasiqui

PROTESTS/A18

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Canvassing of results in Laguna postponed

NIÑA CATHERINE CALLEJA, INQUIRER SOUTHERN LUZON

ABOUT 1,000 supporters of Biñan mayoral candidate Marlyn Alonte mass up in front of the municipal hall, protesting the suspension of canvassing.

STA. CRUZ, LAGUNA—THE COMELEC provincial office suspended the canvassing of election results for the gubernatorial, vice gubernatorial, provincial board and congressional positions pending the granting of the petition of the Comelec chair's son-in-law to declare a "failure of elections" in Biñan town.

Dioscoro P. Pajutan, provincial election supervisor, said he could not say when he could proceed with the canvassing as the Comelec head office had yet to decide on the petition filed by mayoral candidate Jose Ruben Yatco, son-in-law of Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos Sr..

On Thursday, Yatco filed a petition to suspend the canvassing and declare a failure of elections in Biñan because about 50 percent of the voters were allegedly disenfranchised due to "several questionable events."

Reelectionist Gov. Teresita S. "Ningning" Lazaro appealed in a television interview on Saturday to spare the gubernatorial race from the fiasco because the complaints of the petitioner involved only the Biñan officials.

As of noon of May 19, Lazaro was ahead of her opponent Edwin D.L. Olivarez by more than 20,000 votes, excluding votes from Biñan and San Pedro.

Both towns are the bailiwicks of Olivarez, being a resident of San Pedro which is part of the first district.

Olivarez also appeared on television Saturday to express his objection to proceed with the canvassing of the votes while the controversy in Biñan was ongoing.

Comelec records show that the two towns have a total number of registered voters of 239,846.

Olivarez said that if the Comelec declared a failure of elections in Biñan, it should include not only the results at the municipal level but also at the provincial level.

The canvassing of votes in the first district, where movie actor-turned-politician Danilo Ramon S. Fernandez enjoys a commanding lead, would also suffer delay.

The board of canvassers has proclaimed the following winners in the congressional race: Justin Marc Chipeco, second district; Maria Evita Arago, third district, and Edgar San Luis, fourth district.

In Tanauan City, a heated debate flared during Friday night's canvass after the lawyers of Lakas-CMD mayoral candidate Alfredo Corona asked the board of canvassers to suspend for one day the opening of the remaining 15 ballot boxes.

The Comelec, however, rejected Corona's petition and decided to open the boxes by 6 a.m, compelling the candidate's supporters to walk out from the stadium.

Corona's running mate Julius Platon II said his group believed that the ballot boxes contained fake election returns.

Lawyer Grollen Liwag, local election supervisor, denied this.

"The board has decided to open the box for us to know whether there is fraud and we found out that the election returns have no defects. They were authentic," he said.

Sonia Torres-Aquino was proclaimed at 9:45 a.m., Saturday before hundreds of her supporters at the Tanauan Gym.

Platon and nine other winning councilors from Lakas did not attend the proclamation.

Tension gripped the city on Dec. 22, 2005, after the Comelec's second division nullified Corona's proclamation as mayor and declared Torres-Aquino winner in the 2004 elections.

The Supreme Court upheld the Comelec decision on April 25 last year. *Romulo Ponte and Marlon Alexander Luistro, Inquirer Southern Luzon*

Protests mar Comelec . . .

From page A17

town, the Soriano camp filed criminal charges against the election officer after he was caught opening two ballot boxes and allegedly inserting documents believed to be fake election returns.

Arenas denied Soriano's accusations. "We were the ones harassed and intimidated in the different towns of the district," she said.

In Bataan, former Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority Chair Felicito Payumo, who lost in his bid to regain the seat in the first congressional district, bewailed the massive vote-buying and intimidation.

"There was massive vote-buying and harassment of political leaders, although I must admit that I was saddened by the defeat," said Payumo, who lost to Herminia Roman, wife of outgoing Rep. Antonino Roman.

Payumo said he and other candidates in the province were planning to ask the Comelec to declare a failure of elections in Bataan because of the irregularities.

"*Kung magkakaganun, sa susunod na* election *wala nang pagtatalunan na* issue. *Magtatayo na lamang tayo ng* vote-buying stations (If this is the case, we should no longer debate on issues in the next elections. Let us just build vote-buying stations)," Payumo said.

Balanga Bishop Socrates Villegas denounced the irregularities, saying this was the dirtiest polls in the province's history.

But reelected Gov. Enrique Garcia denied all the allegations, saying the elections were "very orderly and peaceful."

Uncanvassed results

In Santiago City in Isabela, the Parish-Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting (PPCRV) and the lawyers of losing mayoral candidate Armando Tan decried the proclamation of Mayor Amelita Navarro.

Fr. John Bartolome, PPCRV-Santiago head, said he was not informed that Navarro and the seven winning councilors belonging to her party were proclaimed at the city market administrator's office, a block away from the canvassing site on May 18.

Miriam Ualat, acting city election officer, said the proclamation was done outside the canvassing area because Tan's supporters were unruly.

She said she feared that members of the canvassing board might be harmed.

She said the board noted the objections from Tan's camp.

Bartolome said the proclamation went on with still 30 precincts left un-canvassed. Three winners from Tan's group were allegedly not informed of the proclamation.

Elias Lelina, Tan's lawyer, said he would contest Navarro's proclamation.

In Bulacan, the proclamation of the winning governor may drag on until next week as votes from San Jose del Monte City, where a big chunk of votes would decide the eventual winner, have yet to be canvassed.

Rosario Reandelar, a Comelec official at the canvassing area, said the poll body might only proclaim the winning governor today or tomorrow as the canvassing in San Jose del Monte, which has 199,483 voters, had been delayed.

Votes from that city may eventually decide who among Board Member Joselito Mendoza and former Gov. Roberto Pagdanganan would emerge as winner.

Bulacan has at least 1.4 million voters, the biggest in Central Luzon.

Both Mendoza and Pagdanganan were claiming victory, citing their camps' monitoring of results. They traded accusations of engaging in fraud and other irregularities.

The provincial board of canvassers on Saturday completed the canvass of 20 of 22 towns and cities in Bulacan.

As of Friday, Pagdanganan, with 197,927 votes, was trailing Mendoza, who had 226,105.

Pagdanganan, however, refused to concede to Mendoza. "Let's just wait for the result. Anyway it is not yet finished," he told the INQUIRER.

San Jose del Monte is considered one of the bailiwicks of Pagdanganan.

On Saturday, lawyer Carim Panumpang, who represents Pagdanganan in the provincial canvassing, filed a complaint against policemen and their officials who allegedly harassed his family at a resort in Calumpit town.

Panumpang said the policemen barged into their rooms at Jed's Island Resort on Friday night. He said he was not there when the policemen arrived.

He said the policemen, who were looking for him, poked their guns at his children and his other family members while they searched their rooms.

Canvassing suspended

In Cagayan, provincial election supervisor Michael Valdez on Saturday ordered the suspension of the canvassing at the provincial capitol in Tuguegarao City following complaints from the camp of reelectionist Gov. Edgar Lara and Tuguegarao Mayor Randolph Ting that the provincial BOC was favoring their rivals led by Rep. Manuel Mamba.

Valdez said the order came from the Comelec's law department.

Levito Baligod, a lawyer from the camp of Lara and Ting, asked the Comelec to replace the board members or ask for their inhibition.

Also on Saturday, the canvassing of election returns from Tuguegarao was suspended after a group of men beat up a relative of former Mayor Delfin Ting in the canvassing area at City Hall.

Ting said one of those who beat up his cousin, Romeo Coo Golayan, was a policeman.

Police officials denied the allegation.

Members of the city board of canvassers said they would meet to decide on the transfer of the canvassing venue.

More winners

In Benguet, Rep. Samuel Dangwa (Lakas CMD) defeated rival Ronald Cosalan (LDP) for the lone congressional seat.

Dangwa, 71, beat Cosalan, 54, by 10,313 votes for his third term.

Observers said the candidates' tribal affiliation defined the trend of the voting.

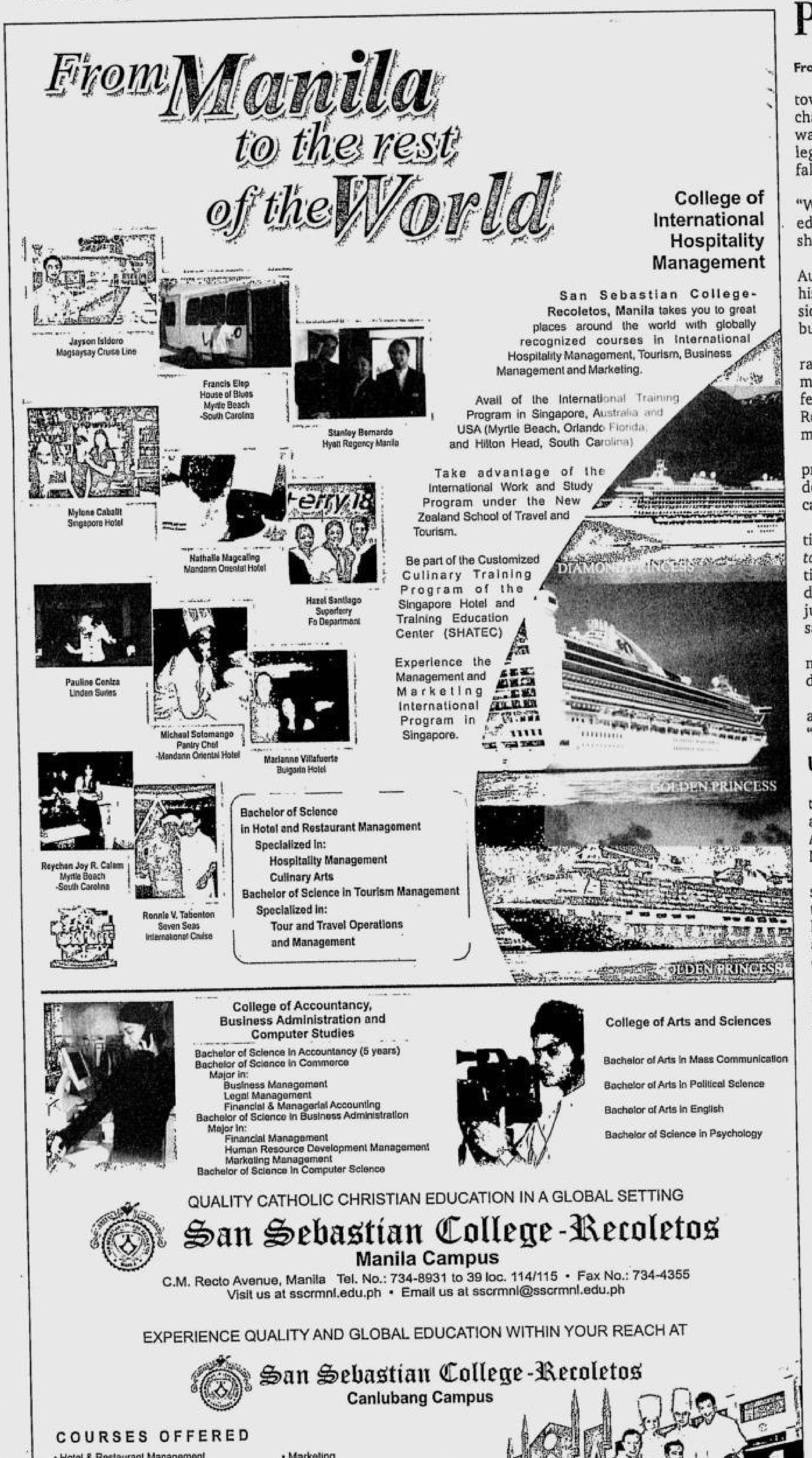
La Trinidad Mayor Nestor Fongwan became the new governor when he defeated reelectionist Gov. Borromeo Melchor.

Fongwan got 55,802 votes while Melchor garnered 46,758.

In Laoag City, the Marcoses continued to dominate Ilocos Norte politics with the victory of outgoing Gov. Ferdinand Marcos as representative of the second district, his cousin Michael Keon as incoming governor, and two other cousins as provincial board member seats.

In Vigan City, Ilocos Sur Gov Luis "Chavit" Singson's protégée, Vice Gov. Deogracias Victor Savellano, was proclaimed governor on Tuesday night. He received 132,656 votes against former Board Member Efren Rafanan's 131,264.

Rafanan claimed massive cheating and election frauds, especially in Savellano's hometown of Cabugao. Savellano, however, denied the charges. *Leoncio Balbin Jr., Yolanda Sotelo-Fuertes, Gabriel Cardinoza, Delmar Cariño, Cristina Arzadon, Frank Cimatu, Villamor Visaya Jr., Melvin Gascon and Estanislao Caldez, Inquirer Northern Luzon; Carmela Reyes and Greg Refraccion, Inquirer Central Luzon*



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Comelec suspends canvassing in Surigao Norte

BUTUAN CITY—THE COMMISSION on Elections ordered the indefinite suspension of canvassing in Surigao del Norte on Saturday amid charges of massive vote-buying, electoral fraud and violence.

Joy Jonathan Sinaca, provincial election supervisor, yesterday said the order came from Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos Sr.

Sinaca said Abalos had told them to hold the canvassing in abeyance pending the resolution of the case filed by Gov. Lyndon Barbers of Lakas-CMD, who ran in the congressional race against Tubod Mayor Guillermo Romarate of the Kabalikat ng Malayang Pilipino (Kampi).

Barbers accused Romarate of engaging in vote-buying, fraud and intimidation, particularly in the two contested towns of Tubod and Mainit.

Barbers also said Romarate used his private army to "prevent, coerce and threaten voters."

Romarate, who was leading in the provincial tally, denied the allegations.

"The Comelec through Chairman Abalos ordered the suspension of canvassing in the whole province due to allegations of fraud and vote-buying," Sinaca told the INQUIRER.

But Romarate said the suspension of the canvassing was very unusual and done without due process.

In a hastily called press conference here yesterday, Romarate said the suspension order was arbitrary and was detrimental to the voters of the province.

"This order came without hearing or notice," Romarate said.

He said Barbers was lying when he claimed that the elections were marred by irregularities.

"There was no [incident of] violence, fraud and vote-buying reported to the local election office and to the police," Romarate said.

He said the order could be part of the "dirty legal maneuvering" employed by his rival to block his victory.

"The people of Surigao have already spoken. Barbers is very desperate and could not accept defeat so he's doing this delaying tactic," Romarate said of his former ally.

As of Saturday, Romarate continued to advance with 62,317 votes from 18 of the 20 areas of the province, including Surigao City, based on the National Citizens' Movement for Free Elections (Namfrel) tally.

Barbers, who switched posts with his brother Rep. Ace Barbers, was trailing with 56,459 votes.

Sinaca said that pending the resumption of the provincial canvassing, no proclamation would be held even if there were no complaints affecting other candidates.

"Consequently, the proclamation of winners for the top positions in the province will have to be delayed," he said. *Franklin A. Caliguid, Inquirer Mindanao*

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Declare poll failure in Sulu, MNLF asks Comelec

ZAMBOANGA CITY—THE MORO NATIONAL Liberation Front (MNLF) has called on the Commission on Elections to declare a failure of elections in the entire province of Sulu.

Habib Zain Jali, chair of the Bangsamoro People's Congress and spiritual adviser of Sulu gubernatorial candidate and MNLF chair Nur Misuari, told the INQUIRER that massive cheating was monitored even before the actual voting took place.

"The Bangsamoro People's Congress will not recognize the result of the election and the conduct of electoral process for obvious reasons—wide-scale fraudulent acts," Jali said.

He cited the case of Luuk town where "midnight voting" allegedly happened.

"They (Comelec personnel) could easily detect that all the ballots bore one thumb mark specimen," he said.

Jali also said thousands of registered voters were disenfranchised as "they are still displaced and languishing in different evacuation centers."

There are 251,218 registered voters in Sulu's 18 towns.

Those who failed to vote on Monday included MNLF commander Ustadz Habier Malik and his men, whom government forces have been pursuing for more than a month now.

Malik registered as a voter in December last year, apparently expecting the candidacy of Misuari.

When Misuari filed his certificate of candidacy, the MNLF announced that it was 90-percent sure of victory, claiming that most of the people of Sulu would support Misuari.

But on April 13, Malik and his men attacked several military camps in retaliation against the raid by government soldiers on an MNLF camp two day earlier.

The fighting has displaced more than 80,000 people.

The MNLF said at least 2,000 of its fighters were not able to cast their votes on Monday. Most of those displaced and who are still in evacuation centers are known Misuari supporters.

Pinky Suarez, Sulu coordinator of the Philippine National Red Cross, said thousands of families from Panamao, Kalinggalang Caluang, Panglima Estino, Tongkil and Indanan towns were still in the evacuation centers.

Suarez said she would not be surprised if the turnout of voters would be very low.

Jali blamed the national government for this. "They (government officials) should have resolved first the crisis in Sulu before holding the election. That is why we don't recognize the results," he said.

Jali said that as far as the MNLF was concerned, its leader Misuari still had the "magic."

"*Malakas at may* following *pa rin si* Maas (elder). The crisis situation has put him down," Jali said.

James Jimenez, spokesperson of the Comelec, said he still did not have a clear picture of the Sulu elections, not even data on voters' turnout.

"We'll have to wait for about two weeks before we can get the actual turnout of voters," he said.

Jimenez advised the MNLF to file a formal petition to declare a failure of elections in Sulu before the Comelec. *Julie S. Alipala, Inquirer Mindanao*

20 local execs support poll failure declaration in Biñan

BIÑAN, LAGUNA—TWENTY OF the 24 barangay chairs of this town have expressed support for the declaration of a failure of elections here even as they echoed allegations of poll fraud supposedly committed against a mayoral candidate who is the son-in-law of Commission on Elections Chair Benjamin Abalos Sr.

In a hastily called news briefing on Saturday, the village chiefs openly declared their endorsement on the petition filed by Jose Ruben "Cookie" Yatco, who accused his rival, incumbent Vice Mayor Marlyn Alonte, of conniving with unscrupulous teachers and the municipal treasurer to delay the opening of precincts in Monday's elections.

ELEKSYON 2007

The barangay chairs said they themselves witnessed how individuals closely connected with Alonte harassed voters and even padlocked some of the precincts in Yatco's known bailiwicks.

In an en banc decision, the Comelec suspended the canvassing of votes in favor of Yatco.

It also scheduled the hearing for Yatco's appeal to declare a failure of elections in the town.

"Some former and current barangay officials were seen inside the polling precincts while telling the voters that the election was suspended and that they should go to the municipal hall to join a protest rally," said a barangay leader, who asked not to be identified for security reasons.

Bomb rumors

Tony Redula, Yatco's counsel, said that in some precincts, Alonte's supporters had told voters that a bomb was found inside the polling place just to prevent them from casting their votes.

Redula said the purported harassment and deliberate commotion happened simultaneously at around 9 a.m. on May 14.

"We have proofs that this was a synchronized and calculated effort to create confusion among our people and terrorize the voters," he told reporters.

Redula also assailed the sudden change in the composition of the board of election inspectors (BEI) which, he said, was done without prior approval from the Comelec.

Aside from the fact that the change was made during the election day itself, almost two-thirds of the BEI members handling the 676 polling precincts were replaced by individuals who are supporters of Alonte, "some of whom were not even registered voters in Biñan," he said.

"Some BEI chairmen were not even teachers. If we have illegal BEI members manning the precincts, we definitely have no elections to speak of," Redula argued.

Yatco, on the other hand, identified Romana Espinosa and Mirasol Isabelo, the former and current district schools supervisors, respectively, as those behind the irregularity in the change of BEI members.

Yatco, who is married to Abalos' youngest daughter Joy, also accused municipal treasurer Angelito Alon-alon of intentionally delaying the release of elections paraphernalia to impede the start of voting.

He said that because of these factors, more than half of the town's more than 106,000 registered voters failed to cast their votes.

"Suspiciously, the delay in the opening of precincts and the harassment of voters occurred only in places where I enjoy mass support," Yatco told the INQUIRER.

> The barangay captains said they themselves witnessed how individuals harassed voters

Capability to commit fraud

Sought for comment, Alonte laughed off allegations that she cheated to defeat Yatco, who is her second cousin. Yatco's father and Alonte's mother are first cousins.

Alonte said, "If somebody has the capability to commit fraud to ensure his victory in the elections, it was Yatco."

"Do you really think I have the power to do that? Am I the in-law of Chairman Abalos?" she quipped.

Alonte said that even her camp protested the delay in the opening of the polling precincts.

She said that if not for the delay, she would have easily beaten Yatco by at least 20,000 votes.

Timing

She questioned the timing of Yatco's petition. "He only filed that upon realizing that I was winning. It was also pretty obvious that the Comelec ruling was railroaded to favor him."

Yatco said it was unfair to link Abalos to the political fuss in Biñan.

He said the issue blaming his affinity to the Comelec chair to the issuance of the suspension on the canvassing of votes was "just a rehashed allegation."

"I am already a politician when I married my father-in-law's daughter. I already won as a top councilor and later as a vice mayor even before my wife's father was appointed Comelec chairman," he said.

"Why? Is it a sin to be the son-in-law of Chairman Abalos?" *Marlon Ramos, Inquirer Southern Luzon*

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'Small but terrible' wins in E. Samar

By Cyrain Cabueñas
Inquirer Visayas

BORONGAN, EASTERN SAMAR—"Small but terrible."

This was the moniker given by the hundreds of supporters and fans to the neophyte congressional candidate who put to a halt the domination of outgoing Rep. Marcelino Libanan in Eastern Samar's politics.

Teodulo "Doloy" Coquilla, 69, was proclaimed winner of the congressional race for the lone district of Eastern Samar close to midnight of May 18, winning over Congressman Libanan's wife Elda with a margin of 7,107 votes.

Coquilla, who initially ran as an independent but eventually became a candidate of the Partido ng Masang Pilipino-United Opposition (PMP-UNO), said it was a David and Goliath battle.

"Who would have expected that a guy who attended high school for nine years will beat the mighty Libanans?" he said. "Friends and relatives have tried to talk me out of the race for I seemed to face a granite wall, and boy, did I prove myself right."

Coquilla was born to a poor family in Oras, Eastern Samar, but was able to make something of himself when he joined the United States Navy. He retired from the US Navy in 1985 and engaged in various business enterprises, including owning apartments, a restaurant, a gas station and a nursing home.

Coquilla had regularly been returning to Oras on vacations but it was in the late 1990s, when he and his Filipino-American wife Zenaida, a retired nurse, decided to leave their home of 40 years in Vallejo, California, to return and settle in Oras.

He ran and won as Oras mayor in 1998 but served only for a year and four months before he was removed because of questions on his residency. He decided to renounce his American citizenship and regained his Filipino citizenship in November 2000. He ran again as mayor of Oras in 2004 but lost.

With less experience and lesser political machinery, Coquilla was never considered a serious contender when he decided to run against a Libanan in the May 14, 2007 elections. He only had a few reluctant supporters.

In contrast, Elda Libanan (Lakas) had the backing of the administration being the wife of a three-term congressman who is also the secretary of the dominant Lakas-Christian Muslim Democrat (Lakas-CMD) party.

However, some events made many Estehanons root for Coquilla.

Lawyer Binley Bergonio, Coquilla's legal counsel, said Coquilla's chance of winning peaked up in the end.

"The neglected road conditions of Eastern Samar did them (the Libanans) in," he said.

"When they made the repairs, election campaign was almost starting already," he added.

Bergonio said the people also sympathized with Coquilla because he was not allowed to campaign at the public plaza in many municipalities.

In a Church-sponsored candidates' forum, Elda Libanan said the roads were not repaired right away because the budget was not approved by the Senate.

In a live radio broadcast yesterday, Congressman Libanan denied any allegations of fraud during elections.

THE JOYS OF SUMMER
A group of boys outdo each other sommersaulting into the clear waters of Lake Kaliraya in Cavinti, Laguna.
ERNIE U. SARMIENTO

Mayor-elect orders ejection of incumbent mayor

RAMON, ISABELA—TENSION rose here on Friday when its newly proclaimed mayoral winner ordered the ejection of the incumbent mayor from office.

"I will vacate my office on June 30," said Mayor Raymond Espidol.

His wife Sarah lost to Wilfredo Tabag in the mayoral contest. Tabag obtained 9,186 votes while Sarah had 7,203.

Dennis August Sanchez, chair of the municipal board of canvassers, proclaimed Tabag and the other winners on Wednesday night.

Tabag also issued a memorandum on May 16 ordering the head of the municipal human resources management office to disregard a May 8 memorandum of Espidol dismissing 99 "emergency" employees, mostly appointed by Tabag.

The memorandum, bearing the letterhead of the office of the municipal mayor, was signed by Tabag.

"He (Tabag) has no legal personality to be issuing such a memorandum as he has yet to assume office on July 1," Isagani de la Cruz, municipal administrator, said.

In 2004, Espidol won the mayoral race but was replaced by Tabag last year when a new municipal board of canvassers proclaimed him winner in that election. Espidol contested the proclamation in a petition he filed with the Commission on Elections.

On April 17, the Comelec issued an en banc resolution ousting Tabag from office. It ruled that the election returns from the town's 41 precincts were spurious, substituted and manufactured.

Espidol assumed office on April 19.

Insp. Rogelio Taliping, municipal police chief, informed Espidol about Tabag's order for the incumbent mayor to vacate his office. He said he received Tabag's instructions on Thursday morning.

But Espidol laughed off the order, telling Taliping that he would only vacate his office on June 30 when his term expires.

Espidol said his May 8 memo that Tabag wanted disregarded had been enforced and the 99 employees were supposed to have stopped working on May 16. *Peter La. Julian, Inquirer Northern Luzon*

Espina patriarch claims defeat a result of black propaganda

CEBU CITY—GERARDO ESPINA SR., PATRIARCH of the most influential political clan in Biliran, yesterday maintained that his defeat in his province's congressional race was a result of a "successfully managed black propaganda campaign."

Espina Sr., who was defeated by a neophyte Glenn A. Chong of Liberal Party, claimed he was a victim of "unfair tactics" engaged by his opponents, and even by some nuns and priests who used the pulpit to malign him.

He said among the issues raised against him included being linked to the killing last year in Cebu of former Gov. Danilo Parilla.

He said that it was true that Gene Corpin, the gunman in the Parilla killing, used to work as a security personnel at the Biliran Capitol, but the latter had been dismissed months before Parilla was killed on Sept. 7, 2006, as he was disembarking from a boat in Cebu City.

He said Corpin was a known tough guy in his province and reportedly killed Parilla because a few days earlier Parilla had manhandled him before several people in Naval's Barbecue Plaza.

As the incumbent mayor of the capital town of Naval, he said he had also been accused of building a "ghost" hospital worth P21 million. "The truth is that the P21 (million) is not for a hospital for Naval has no hospital of its own, but for the Municipal Public Market Complex and Slaughter House," Espina Sr. said in a statement sent to the INQUIRER on Saturday.

He said he was also accused of raising the real estate taxes and public market stalls rental in Naval when "the truth is that real estate taxes and rentals were raised before my time."

"I was only very strict in both tax and rental collection resulting in the upgrading of Naval from a 4th Class to a 3rd class municipality on the first half of my term as Naval mayor," he said.

Espina Sr. said he was also falsely accused of using government money in his lending business that catered mainly to small rice farmers and vendors.

Espina said the Biliran Small Business Credit Assistance (BSBCA), which he owns, provides low-interest loans so that vendors and small rice farmers would no longer have to go to loan sharks. He maintained BSBCA does not use government fund and is duly registered with appropriate agencies.

He maintained he got the ire of some Catholic priests and nuns because of his support for family planning, which he launched last year.

Despite his defeat, Espina Sr. said he was happy that his son, Rogelio, was elected governor of Biliran, together with all his slate in the provincial board.

"In the capital town of Naval, except for the mayor, our vice mayoral candidate and 7 out of 8 municipal councilors won."

Parilla's widow, Susan Velasquez-Parilla, was elected mayor of Naval.

"But no regrets. From Boy's Town Orphanage to Deputy Speaker for the Visayas of the House of Representatives and 21 years of various elective positions, is more than I ever dreamed of," Espina Sr. said.

Army asked to present intel officer in abduction

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
Inquirer Visayas

ILOILO CITY—THE LAWYERS AND FAMILIES of two abducted activists in Iloilo urged the military to order its former intelligence officer in Western Visayas to appear before the court to shed light on the abduction.

They said the continued absence of Col. Mariano Perez in the hearings on a petition for habeas corpus have bolstered their suspicion that military intelligence agents were involved in the April 12 abduction of Nilo Arado and Ma. Luisa Posa-Dominado.

"If they have nothing to hide, why has he not appeared in the hearings?" said lawyer Hector Teodosio, one of the counsel of the petitioners.

Teodosio said AFP chief Gen. Hermogenes Esperon should require Perez to attend the hearings.

Perez failed to attend Thursday's hearing at the Regional Trial Court Branch 34 and two other previous hearings. Only officials of the Army's 3rd Infantry Division were present.

Attempts of the court to serve subpoenas to Perez to attend the hearings have failed. Court representatives who tried to serve the subpoenas at the office of the Military Intelligence Group at Camp Martin Delgado in Iloilo on April 30 and May 4 said employees of the Military Intelligence Group (MIG) office refused to accept a copy of the court order and summons.

"This is a show of disrespect of a government office against a court," said Teodosio.

Perez was relieved from his post a few days after the two victims were abducted by unidentified armed men in Oton town in Iloilo. Arado was chair of the militant Bagong Alyansang Makabayan in Panay while Dominado was spokesperson of the Samahan ng mga Ex-Detainees Laban sa Detensyon at para sa Amnestiya (Selda-Panay).

Lt. Col David Tan, 3ID public information officer, had said that they did not know the exact date and basis of Perez's transfer to Manila because they belong to different units of the AFP.

Perez is among the respondents for the petition for habeas corpus filed by the victims' families. The other respondents include Col. Renato David, commander of the Army's 301st Brigade, and 3ID commander Maj. Gen. Jovenal Narcise.

Narcise and David have denied any involvement in the abduction of the two activists.

Narcise has offered to contribute P100,000 in reward money to help locate the two victims.

In an earlier interview with the INQUIRER, Narcise said he wanted to prove to the families of Dominado and Arado that they want to help locate the two victims and belie allegations that his unit is involved in the abduction.

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Duterte, daughter dominate Davao City politics

DAVAO CITY—AS EXpected, reelectionist Mayor Rodrigo Duterte won a fresh three-year term while his daughter and running mate Sara's first shot at politics succeeded.

On Friday night, the Dutertes were among the proclaimed winners in the May 14 elections here.

But they failed to attend the proclamation ceremony because Sara had to be brought to Manila for medical tests concerning her kidney problem.

It was an easy win for the Dutertes, who faced virtually unknown opponents.

Duterte got 382,185 votes while Sara got 338,095 against lone opponent, Jeff Ho.

Irma Vera Morcillo, chair of the city board of canvassers, announced the names of the Dutertes, along with most members of the mayor's Hugpong sa Tawong Lungsod (Alliance of City Dwellers) party.

Of the Hugpong candidates, only Councilor Nenita Orcullo (second district) and neophyte council candidate Jeppie Ramada (third district) were defeated.

TIRED Board of Election Inspectors and their police escort arrive at the Almendras Gym in Davao City from Barangay Mapula in Paquibato District, a day after the elections that ended with no violence.
BING GONZALES/INQUIRER MINDANAO

In the congressional race, Rep. Prospero Nograles got 114,896 votes against two less-known candidates.

Tough fights

It was a different story in the second and third districts.

In the second district, reelectionist Rep. Vincent Garcia faced two tough opponents, former city Councilor Jimmy Dureza and lawyer Abelardo Aportadera Jr. Garcia won by garnering 65,642 votes.

In the third district, former Councilor Isidro Ungab, a Duterte ally, bested reelectionist Rep. Roy Elias Lopez and former Mayor Benjamin de Guzman.

It would have been De Guzman's first attempt at politics after Duterte trashed him in the 2001 elections.

In Davao del Sur, the hotly contested gubernatorial race between Representatives Douglas Cagas and Claude Bautista is far from being resolved after lawyers from both camps filed protests one after the other.

Yesterday, both camps claimed victory, citing National Citizens' Movement for Free Elections (Namfrel) records, even as the Comelec was still trying to resolve the protests.

In Mati, Davao Oriental, Rep. Corazon Malanyaon trashed reelectionist Gov. Maria Elena Palma-Gil by over 50,000 votes.

But the Palma-Gils are not yet off the political scene.

Palma-Gil's daughter, Board Member Maria Consuelo Palma Gil-Roflo won her reelection bid.

In Compostela Valley, the bitter war between pro-administration parties Kabalikat ng Malayang Pilipino and Lakas-CMD ended on Friday.

Dominant party

Lakas candidates succeeded in the congressional, gubernatorial and vice gubernatorial races. Also, at least eight Lakas candidates won in the 10-seat provincial board.

The provincial board of canvassers on Friday proclaimed Arturo "Chiongkee" Uy as governor-elect. Uy got 136,570 votes against Kris Caballero's 81,533.

Reelectionist Vice Gov. Ramil Gentugaya won with 122,907 votes against Arman Seras' 80,432.

In the first district, reelectionist Rep. Manuel "Way Kurat" Zamora won a fresh term with 63,964 votes over Lito Brillantes' 35,596, and Diwalwal village chief Franco Tito's 2,167.

Outgoing Gov. Jose Caballero lost to Rommel Amatong in the the second district. Caballero garnered 42,000 votes while Amatong got 76,320. *Rizalene Acac, Ferdinand Zuasola, Orlando Dinoy and Allan Nawal, Inquirer Mindanao*

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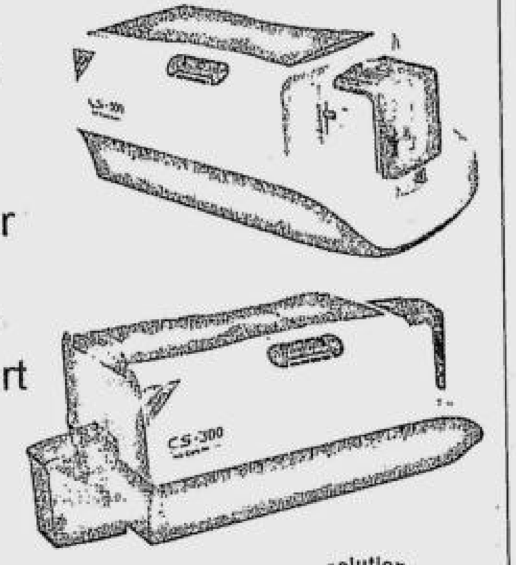

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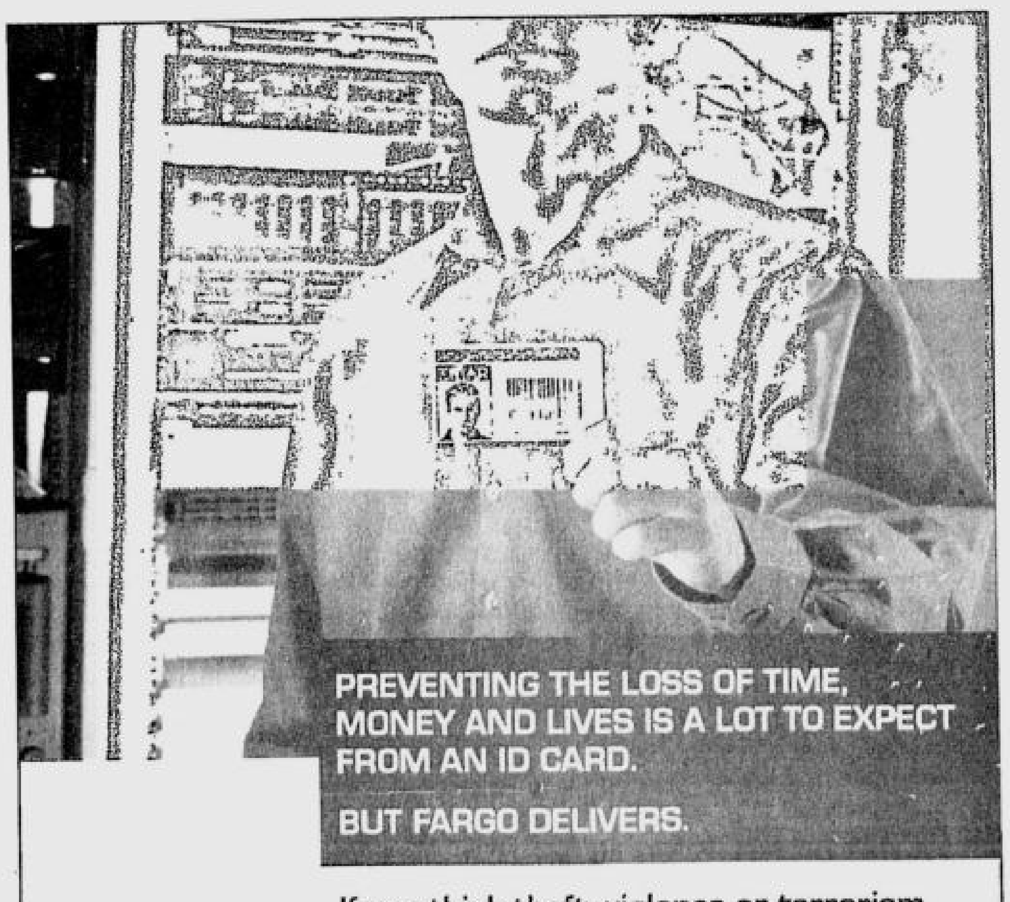

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IS THIS THE FACE OF JESUS CHRIST? YOU DECIDE...

Panlilio win should not set precedent, says party

By Christian V. Esguerra and Nikko Dizon

WHAT DOES FR. EDDIE PANLILIO'S victory mean to the Catholic Church in the Philippines and its occasionally prickly relationship with politicians?

A Catholic political party which fielded candidates in the May 14 elections yesterday warned that Panlilio's victory as Pampanga governor should not set a precedent for fellow clergymen to join politics directly.

"It shouldn't be the case," Nandy Pacheco, founder of Ang Kapatiran, told the INQUIRER yesterday.

Pacheco and fellow Catholic professionals were particularly concerned about the extent of clergymen's involvement in the political sphere, which explained why they took it upon themselves to form a Catholic political party three years ago.

They had stated that Kapatiran was to be strictly guided by the social doctrines of the Church, including the guidance on the clergy's involvement in political affairs.

Knowing that the Vatican didn't encourage the clergy's direct participation in governance, Kapatiran invited lay Catholics to run for public office this May. Besides three senatorial candidates, it also contested 25 local positions.

The idea of lay Catholics—not their shepherds—directly getting involved in politics appeared guided by the first encyclical of Pope Benedict XVI titled "Deus Caritas Est" (God is Love).

Its section on justice and charity provides a clear and balanced discussion on Church and politics:

"The Church cannot and must not take upon herself the political battle to bring about the most just society possible. She cannot and must not replace the State.

Play her part

"Yet at the same time she cannot and must not remain on the sidelines in the fight for justice. She has to play her part through rational argument and she has to reawaken the spiritual energy without which justice, which always demands sacrifice, cannot prevail and prosper.

"A just society must be the achievement of politics, not of the Church. Yet the promotion of justice through efforts to bring about openness of mind and will to the demands of the common good is something which concerns the Church deeply."

Panlilio's 'peculiar case'

Despite his group's strict position on the clergy's involvement in politics, Pacheco expressed flexibility in the case of the 53-year-old Panlilio.

"His case is peculiar," he said. "I think he really called on people to run for governor, but there was no one else."

In the end, the supposedly reluctant Panlilio beat Lilia Pineda and incumbent Gov. Mark Lapid, whose families controlled Pampanga politics for many years.

"Now that he's there, we, even those who are not from Pampanga, should all support him and pray for him," Pacheco said. "His political opponents will jump at every opportunity to destroy him. They will set traps all over him so we should all be vigilant."

Pacheco also cautioned the faithful against resting all hope solely on the shoulders of one man even if he was a priest.

To be sure, he said there would be failures during Panlilio's administration and issues would be hurled against him.

"We don't want the people to end up disillusioned, thinking that their hero was not one at all," he said.

Fr. Robert Reyes, the popular running priest who is on leave from his parish and is teaching English in China, said yesterday in a statement to the Inquirer that Panlilio's dual role as priest and elected official will test the constitutional provision on the separation of church and state.

Reyes said Filipinos, and indirectly the Church, should set aside the question of how Panlilio would balance his role as priest and politician and instead give him and the people of Pampanga much needed support.

He said Filipinos often fail to see that change should start with themselves and this often result in "indecision and noncommitment."

"In the end, we spend time and energy agonizing about whether to act or not to act in a way that is 'politically' or 'ecclesiastically' correct and missing the opportunity to do good," Reyes said.

Common Pampanga folk assert will from the ground

From page A1

Pineda, and the sitting governor.

More than any other candidate in the 2007 elections, Panlilio stood Philippine conventional wisdom on its head in what is truly a political breakthrough in a province with a long history of agrarian unrest and landlord feudalism.

Frankly, I cannot bring myself to share the enthusiasm of a number of gullible political commentators who have been watching for signs of change in political leadership recruitment from the senatorial election returns.

They are beside themselves singing praises over the staying power of two military rebels—Gregorio Honasan and Antonio Trillianes IV, both basking in the dubious glory of their involvement in the failed 2003 Oakwood mutiny—in the winning 12 column of the still-incomplete senatorial canvass.

The instant analysis heralded Honasan and Trillanes as the torch bearers of a new generation of relatively youthful politicians promising to be the "hope of the fatherland."

Some have even held out Trillanes as the "new Ramon Magsaysay, untainted by corruption and idealistic." It is a claim that conveniently overlooks the evidence at the court-martial of Trillanes for alleged rebellion relative to the political financiers of their failed putsch.

Healthy skepticism

A healthy skepticism over the emergence of new messiahs arising from whatever sector, particularly the military, a natural breeding ground of self-promoted saviors of Philippine democracy, is the best weapon for journalists to protect themselves from jumping on board the bandwagon of newly discovered "heroes" and the public from worshipping at the altar of new political idols emerging from this election, only to be disillusioned to find later that their idols have feet of clay.

Armed with this skepticism, I view Panlilio's election with qualifications and assess it on what verifiable evidence permits. It is for this reason that I hesitate to be swept off my feet by the exuberant celebration of overenthusiastic civil society do-gooders who claim Panlilio's election is a "miracle."

One such civil society leader, known to be a bitter critic of President Macapagal-Arroyo, enthused: Panlilio "has come out as one of the best examples of new Philippine politics, one who challenged the worst of Philippine politics."

A pocket of hope

According to this assessment, "he (Panlilio) is showing that you can win without guns, goons, gold and 'Garci.'" He represents a zone of energy, a pocket of hope in Philippine politics."

To do justice to Panlilio's remarkable political feat and to recognize its precedent-shattering significance, it is sufficient to stay with the facts. Panlilio won in a six-cornered gubernatorial race, with 219,707 votes, winning by a thin margin of only 1,147.

He defeated Lilia Pineda, a provincial board member, and reelectionist Gov. Mark Lapid. Pineda is the wife of alleged "jueteng" lord Bong Pineda, and Lapid is the son of former Pampanga Gov. and incumbent Sen. Lito Lapid, who has been defeated by Mayor Jejomar Binay in the election for mayor of Makati City.

Both Pineda and Lapid are known to be close to Ms Arroyo, making Panlilio's election a rebuff to Ms Arroyo by the Pampanga electorate in her home grounds.

People Power miracle?

To claim that Panlilio's election was a "miracle" and another demonstration of "people power" misrepresents the true measure of his victory. What the election revealed was that the common people of Pampanga asserted their will from the ground without assistance from the secular political leaders and even from the Catholic Church's elite.

Panlilio took a leave from his parish duties, heeding the clamor for an alternative by citizens fed up with the illegal gambling issues in the province and the rule of traditional power brokers.

The citizens' army that responded to Panlilio's call, composed mainly of 30,000 volunteers, including 33 lawyers, campaigned for him, guarded and watched the vote being counted at the polling stations.

The volunteers did not respond to a call from the top as the people did in 1986 to summons of the late Jaime Cardinal Sin to go to the streets to protect the beleaguered mutineers in Camp Aguinaldo who broke away from the Marcos dictatorship. In this sense, the Pampanga "people power," was one driven from below and not from above.

CBCP not ecstatic

In fact, the Catholic hierarchy distanced itself from Panlilio when he launched his election campaign. The Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines was not especially ecstatic over the election victory.

Archbishop Angel Lagdameo, CBCP president, welcomed Panlilio's election but made clear that the Church was not encouraging priests to seek political office. He was mindful that the Church hierarchy had been under criticism for intervening in politics, blurring the line separating the Church and the State.

Panlilio's election is a one-of-a-kind political phenomenon. It should not be taken as a harbinger of a model of a catalyst of social and political change.

Panlilio faces the test of what an ex-priest can do to change politics or maybe as a better agent of change in politics than ex-soldiers.

Pineda questions priest's win

From page A1

ficial Comelec form."

"The lawyer of Board Member Pineda also expressed her intention to file a petition when the (municipal) canvassing was over," Dabu said on Friday's canvassing.

Pineda did not answer INQUIRER calls to her mobile phone on Sunday.

Based on the Mabalacat ERs, reelectionist Gov. Mark Lapid obtained the highest number of votes at 21,419. Panlilio received 16,476 votes and Pineda, 13,491.

Minus the Mabalacat votes, Pineda commanded a lead of 1,838 votes over Panlilio.

Time to unite

Panlilio took the lead when votes from Magalang, the last town to be tallied, arrived. There, Panlilio received 11,097 votes, giving him an edge of 1,147 votes over Pineda.

As Pineda questioned Panlilio's victory, the spokesperson of her party, the Kabalikat ng Malayang Pilipino (Kampi), offered the hand of reconciliation to the new governor yesterday.

"I think it is time now to unite behind Among Ed (Panlilio) for the sake of Pampanga," reelected Candaba Mayor Jerry Pelayo told the INQUIRER by phone.

Pelayo said he still supported Pineda because she had accepted the request of the Pampanga Mayors League (PML) to challenge Lapid.

Pelayo said he had asked the PML to convene today to set the league's agenda with Panlilio.

He said this included the convening of the provincial development council, the creation of another advisory council and the clustering of towns for water and waste management.

High expectations

"There are high expectations on Among Ed. His administration could make it happen if the Kapampangan participate in his governance. Out of respect for the will of the people, we need to unite behind him," Pelayo said.

On Ascension Day yesterday, Panlilio attended Mass at the St. James Parish in Betis, Guagua town, the last parish he served, as a form of thanksgiving.

"I hope Atching (Sister) Lilia would accept the outcome of the elections with calm. The election is over and we should all get down to work for our people and our province," Panlilio said when asked about her protest.

Lapid has taken time off to rest, according to his chief campaigner, Fidel Arcenas.

Fraud claims denied

Arcenas denied that the governor or his father, Sen. Manuel "Lito" Lapid, had resorted to fraud in the elections.

"We don't have the resources and machinery to do that," he said, reacting to allegations that the Lapids bought votes in resettlement sites and several towns on the night of May 13.

Arcenas said the proposal to coalesce with Panlilio to fight Pineda's alleged electoral fraud did not directly come from the younger Lapid.

"The initiative came from one of our leading supporters," he said.

Masbate: Old dynasty out, new dynasty in

From page A1

"Tony" Kho.

The third-term governor, in turn, won the congressional race in the second district, defeating Maloli Espinosa-Manalastas by a margin of 13,679 votes.

Reelectionist Vice Gov. Vicente "Vince" Revil handily won over Espinosa Jr.'s eldest daughter, Nanette, by some 22,000 votes.

Manalastas, former ABS-CBN vice president for corporate affairs and public relations, is the eldest daughter of slain Rep. Moises Espinosa.

The Khos, who came to power only a decade ago, thus ended a political dynasty—one of the longest in the country—in one fell swoop.

The Espinosa dynasty was started by Emilio Espinosa Sr. who served in the 10th Philippine Legislature in the 1930s.

His sons—Emilio Jr., Tito and Moises—all became congressmen.

In 1995, Tito's wife Vida won the congressional seat after her husband's death. She served three terms before being succeeded in the post in 2004 by son-in-law Narciso Bravo Jr., husband of her daughter Ma. Vida "Marvie."

By a very slim margin, Marvie also lost the mayoral race in San Fernando town.

Women and change

Asked about the killings that marred the campaign in the province, Elisa Kho said "that will change with women elected into office."

Two women won mayoral races—Gracia Llamado, a businesswoman, in Baleno, and Dr. Natividad Magbalon, a former local health officer, in Milagros.

Magbalon defeated the father-son tandem of Bernardito and Lester Abapo, key allies of the Espinosas.

Elisa Kho, the elected governor, said she would continue the projects of her husband and focus more on poverty-alleviating projects and activities aimed at triggering an economic boom in the poverty-stricken province.

Kho dynasty

Save for Bravo Jr., who won his reelection bid in the first district, not one scion of the once well-entrenched Espinosa clan won any of the elective seats in the 20 towns, one city and three congressional districts in the province.

In the third district, home of the Khos, reelectionist Rep. Rizalina Seachon-Lanete won by a landslide, ensuring the survival of her family's political life after the assassination of her brother, Fausto, who lost to Antonio Kho in the 2004 gubernatorial race.

Ruben Fuentes, a commentator on local radio dyME, said Monday's elections could signal the end of an era but the beginning of another family's reign in the province.

Too much blood had been shed in the province, and the killings that preceded the elections were a testament to the power of guns, gold and goons, Fuentes said.

Now 84, Emilio Jr. did not face Kho in the gubernatorial races in the last nine years.

The May 14 elections may have been Emilio Jr.'s chance to seize back the capitol from the man allegedly linked to the killings of his younger brothers, Moises and Tito.

Assassinations

Moises served as congressman of the third district from 1987 until he was assassinated on March 17, 1989 on the tarmac of Masbate's airport. He had served as mayor, vice governor and governor.

Tito served two terms in the first district in 1987-92 and 1992-95. He was assassinated on Feb. 28, 1995, in Quezon City.

Kho insisted that he was innocent, and the courts later sided with him, clearing him of any liability.

Emilio Jr. alternately served as governor and congressman of the lone district and later the second district, the clan's bailiwick, for half a century, attesting to his political acumen and clout.

Old Boys' Club

Until the entry of Kho, Emilio Jr. was the province's political kingpin. Speaker Jose de Venecia considered him a respected senior official of the Nationalist People's Coalition and part of the so-called Old Boys' Club in Congress.

The Espinosas started their foray into local politics when their patriarch, Emilio Sr., served as a member of the 10th Philippine Legislature from 1934 to 1935.

He returned to the legislature under the 3rd Commonwealth Government from 1941 to 1946. He became a congressman in the 1st Congress of the new Philippine Republic from 1946 to 1949 and in the 2nd Congress from 1949 to 1953.

Redistricted in 1986

Masbate was part of Sorsogon until it was granted its own representation in 1919, becoming part of Bicol. From 1978 to 1984, and from 1984 to 1986 it elected two assemblymen at-large.

In 1986, it was divided into three legislative districts.

Emilio Jr. represented the then lone congressional district of Masbate in 1957-61 and in 1961-65.

He tried his luck on the national stage, but failed to win a Senate seat in 1965. He then returned to the pre-martial law House of Representatives from 1969 to 1972.

Emilio Jr. was governor from 1980 to 1986 and 1988 to 1998, while Luz Cleta R. Bakunawa was representing the second district from 1988 to 1998. He reclaimed the congressional post in 1998.

Bakunawa, for her part, lost the gubernatorial race to Kho in 1998 although her three successive terms marked an era of unprecedented infrastructure spending, including construction of dirt roads, school buildings, grandstands and the first Olympic-size swimming pool on the island.

Triumvirate

Moises and Tito, then congressmen of the two other districts, and Emilio Jr., as governor, ruled as a triumvirate, cementing their hold on power.

From the second district, home to the capital town also named Masbate, the clan extended their influence to cover all 21 towns.

But with the death of his two younger brothers in a span of six years, Emilio Jr. was considered the last man standing.

Governor Kho ironically started his political career as a close associate of the late Assemblyman Venancio Yaneza, a *niño bonito* of the late strongman Ferdinand Marcos during martial law.

The late Yaneza and Jolly Fernandez served as assemblymen of Masbate after Marcos reopened in 1984 the Batasang Pambansa.

The duo had led the only real challenge to the Espinosas' political long reign. Armed with charisma and good looks, the two lawyers were close allies whose ultimate aim was to dislodge the Espinosas from their firm grip of the province's seat of power.

But the alliance ended when Yaneza, then being groomed by Marcos to run for governor, died. Fernandez then went on to become acting governor in April 1986 following the Edsa I revolt, but lost the post in the election two years after.

In what appeared to be a political vendetta, he, too, was assassinated while on his way to the provincial capitol in Masbate on Oct. 30, 1991.

Left to fend for his own, the then obscure Kho managed to win the mayoral race in Cataingan, a sleepy town in the third district where the Espinosas had no strong allies following the death of Moises in 1989.

After the death of Yaneza and Fernandez, Kho made it a personal crusade to go against the well-entrenched Espinosa clan. He counted as allies Vicente Lim, former Masbate mayors Nestor Lim and Susana Lim.

With Moises dead, Kho won the congressional race in the third district against Moises Jr., and served for one term, from 1992 to 1995.

Emboldened

Emboldened, Kho promptly set his sight on the governorship in the succeeding election but lost to Emilio.

Kho subsequently lodged an election protest, and was declared winner two months before the 1998 elections.

Kho finally rewrote the rules of the game when he sought a rematch with Emilio in the 1998 gubernatorial race. The latter, however, avoided a face-off, opting to slide down as representative of the second district, the clan's traditional bailiwick.

With no real opponents, both won.

The next nine years saw no major killings of political leaders in the province, with both sides observing an undeclared ceasefire, and with Emilio Jr. making no effort to challenge Kho's hold on power, save for fielding token opponents in the 2001 and 2004 elections.

Talks of a possible Espinosa-Kho alliance bogged down late last year when both sides refused to give way—Kho fielded his wife against the congressman, while Maloli ran against the governor.

Maloli's brother, Moises Jr., became mayor of the capital Masbate only to be killed 40 days later while attending a barangay fiesta on July 9, 2001. Her elder brother, Mario, who served as vice governor more than a decade ago, did not run this time.

Dev't eludes province

Despite the relative peace in the last decade, development continued to elude residents of this fourth-class province.

Most of the national government projects don't reach this island.

Masbateños blamed the underdevelopment on the failure of the leadership to get much-needed help from Manila.

Half of the 700,668 population was of voting age, according to the 2000 Census.

Masbate has the third highest incidence of poverty after Zamboanga del Norte and Maguindanao, with San Pascual and Cawayan towns among the 40 poorest towns in the country.

But will the changing of the guard usher in reforms and lift the Masbateños from the clutches of poverty?

'I filled up ballots in Maguindanao'

From page A1

ERs, including Namfrel's sixth copy."

"In view of what we perceive as the systematic withholding of the ERs to Namfrel that casts doubt on the integrity of the sixth copy of the election returns, we will…not include the Maguindanao results in our quick count," Tanudtanud said.

Following the teacher's allegations, Lente urged the Comelec to send a Manila-based team to Maguindanao to investigate her charges.

Medina said the teacher had suggested that the Comelec open all the ballot boxes in Maguindanao to see the fraud for itself.

The teacher's allegation followed reports that candidates of President Macapagal-Arroyo were posting 12-0 scores in the senatorial race in Maguindanao, which is part of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM).

Maguindanao was one of the ARMM provinces mentioned in the "Hello Garci" tapes where cheating allegedly occurred in 2004 to help Ms Arroyo win the presidential election.

The 12-0 vote TU has been getting in Maguindanao flies in the face of voting results in many other areas of the country where the Genuine Opposition candidates were registering winning tallies of 8-2-2 or 7-3-2.

While Lente remains in touch with the teacher, Medina refused to identify her.

"I cannot reveal her identity. Her safety relies on the fact that she is not known and so are her whereabouts," Medina told reporters.

"She fears that if she is known, her entire family will be put in danger, even her relatives will be affected."

"But what was evident in our conversation was her sense of frustration over the whole thing," the lawyer said.

It also happened in 2004

Medina said the teacher complained this was not the first time she and her colleagues were forced to fill ballots at gunpoint.

The teacher also alleged she and the others were ordered to fill up blank ballots in the 2004 elections.

According to Medina, the teacher said she only followed orders from a superior.

"She is scared to name the governor (*Natatakot niyang sabihin ang pangalan ng gobernador*)," Medina said.

But the teacher was more open in discussing the specific instructions given to them.

"They had a list, first on it was Singson, second was Pichay, and so on," Medina said in Filipino. "The instructions to them were to write these names down on the ballots."

He also quoted the teacher as saying: "*Ganito na lang ba tuwing eleksyon? Kailan ito matatapos?* (Is this how it will always be during elections? When will it ever end?)"

The teacher initially sought the help of radio station dzRH, which in turn referred her to Lente—the Legal Network for Truthful Elections.

Medina said the teacher refused to execute an affidavit, give interviews or sign any document that would establish her identity.

"Time is of the essence here," Medina said, referring to the need for the Comelec to act urgently. "If those boxes are not opened, the contents might be changed even as we speak."

Pichay's lawyer, Mildred Duero-Romero, dismissed the teacher's story.

"The teacher's accusations are unfair. Only once these are verified will we answer her. What she said was not under oath and any Tom, Dick and Harry can issue a statement like that," Duero-Romero said in a telephone interview.

Pichay's bailiwick

"Butch Pichay is expected to rank high in Mindanao as he comes from said region and it is his bailiwick," she later said in a text message.

The INQUIRER also sought comments from Singson and TU spokesperson Ben Evardone, but text messages to them drew no replies.

Maguindanao officials have defended the 12-0 scores for TU candidates, saying they were not part of any vote manipulation but were in line with the local culture of reaching a consensus on matters of public concern.

Medina said the teacher "and the other teachers stayed up all night, staying inside a classroom in a still unknown public school somewhere in Maguindanao until 3 p.m. of Monday, May 14."

"She did not sleep nor was she paid. She stayed up all night along with the board of election inspectors (BEI) filling up ballots."

No use for indelible ink

The teacher's claims seemed consistent with those of some local officials who said no elections took place in the province.

"The teacher said that on May 14 at 3 p.m., all precincts closed and no actual voting took place, although the teachers were all inside the precincts. The indelible ink supplied by Comelec Manila was not used at all," Medina said.

He said other teachers had indicated interest in supporting the statement of the female witness as long as they remained unidentified and their safety was assured.

Should the Comelec continue to demand documentary evidence, the fraud committed would again go unpunished, Medina said.

"We request the Comelec to send an investigation team and talk to the common folk, look for indelible ink on their fingers because the teacher said the ink was not used," he said.

Challenge to Abalos

To Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos' challenge that proof must be shown that fraud was committed, Medina said: "Forego the required affidavits and witnesses. On its own, the (commission) should inspect and find out and interview people."

One of the GO candidates fighting to stay in the Magic 12, Aquilino "Koko" Pimentel III, and his lawyers will file an election protest with the Comelec today to denounce delays in the canvassing in some polling centers in Mindanao, specifically in Maguindanao.

This was disclosed yesterday by Pimentel's father, Sen. Aquilino "Nene" Pimentel Jr., who estimated that the election protest could affect some half million votes in Maguindanao, Sultan Kudarat and Shariff Kabunsuan.

Such a block of votes could hold up the proclamation of senators fighting for the last four to five slots, he said.

Pimentel said the reason for the delay of the canvassing was obvious—operators of "*dagdag-bawas*" (vote-padding and -shaving) were waiting until all the votes in other areas had been counted so they would know how many votes to produce, using rigged tallies. *With reports Gil C. Cabacungan Jr., Maan Festejo and Kathleen Olarte*

File formal complaint, says Comelec official

By Nikko Dizon

ELECTION COMMISSIONER Rene Sarmiento yesterday urged Lente to send him a formal complaint about alleged cheating in Maguindanao.

"The (allegation) has to be validated," he told the INQUIRER.

Stressing the need for a validation and counter checking of reports, Sarmiento noted that in Sulu there were also allegations the elections were over even before May 14.

Yet, he said, the provincial election supervisor reported a heavy turnout of voters.

"There are reports that are not true. That's why we have to check and validate them," Sarmiento said.

Sarmiento said he had not ignored the allegations that some Comelec personnel were accused of cheating in the 2004 elections in the area. This was why he implemented a regular reshuffle of election officers.

But higher Comelec officers could no longer be reshuffled at the time he came in as commissioner in charge of the area because "more problems" might arise, Sarmiento said.

Sarmiento said the Comelec had appointed lawyer Iphraim Bagit from the main office as new provincial election supervisor in Lanao del Sur to oversee the special elections on May 26.

He said a team of special action officers composed of the "best EOs (election officers) from different parts of the country" had been created for the special elections in Lanao del Sur.

Comelec count puts Pichay in 10th place

From page A1

and unofficial" canvass, gave the TU five candidates in the winning circle, the same as the Genuine Opposition. Two independents also made the cut.

The partial totals were computed by the INQUIRER from the certificates of canvass (CoCs) read by the Comelec, which is sitting as the National Board of Canvassers.

The CoCs from Pampanga, the home province of President Macapagal-Arroyo, boosted the standing of Pichay and those of other TU candidates.

But in the count by the National Citizens' Movement for Free Elections (Namfrel) last night, GO increased its number of slots to eight, leaving TU with just two slots in the winning circle. Two independents also made it.

Pichay had never made it to the Magic 12 in the separate quick counts by the media and Namfrel.

Neither was he in the Top 12 candidates in the nationwide exit poll conducted by Pulse Asia Inc. on Election Day on May 14.

But Pichay placed second, after Luis "Chavit" Singson of TU, in the partial count of votes in Maguindanao, where all the 12 TU candidates landed in the winning circle. The Maguindanao voting was allegedly attended by fraud.

As of 9:30 last night, the other TU candidates who made it to the Magic 12 in the Comelec count were Joker Arroyo (7th place), Edgardo Angara (8th), Ralph Recto (9th), and Miguel Zubiri (12th).

The five GO candidates were Loren Legarda (1st), Francis Escudero (2nd), Manuel Villar (3rd), Panfilo Lacson (5th), and Noynoy Aquino (6th).

The independents were Francis Pangilinan (4th) and Gregorio Honasan (11th).

Alan Cayetano of GO, who consistently landed in the winning circle in the previous media and Namfrel counts, dropped to 13th place last night from 8th place on Saturday night.

Antonio Trillanes of GO slid to No. 15 from No. 9.

Aquilino Pimentel III of GO dropped to No. 16 from No. 12.

From 16th to 10th place

Pichay, who ranked 16th as of 6:30 last night, jumped to the 10th spot with 2,688,133 votes. He earned 413,275 votes from Pampanga alone.

From the 13th slot, Recto rose to 9th place with 2,849,908 votes. Pampanga, an administration bailiwick, delivered 15 percent or 455,066 votes for him.

Zubiri climbed two slots higher, moving to 12th.

The poll body has so far tallied CoCs from 35 provinces and 5 cities in Metro Manila or from 75,043 precincts out of the 225,000 precincts nationwide.

The Comelec has also tallied CoCs from 68 foreign posts for the overseas voting.

Wanting more time to rest, the National Board of Canvassers composed of the Comelec commissioners resumed the tallying of COCs at 4 p.m. yesterday.

In the Namfrel count, Zubiri, after basking in the Magic 12 for a day on Saturday night, moved back to 13th place after Pimentel regained the 12th slot.

Legarda remained at No. 1, followed by Escudero, Lacson and Villar.

At No. 5 was Pangilinan. Aquino was No. 6; Angara, No. 7; Arroyo, No. 8; Honasan, No. 9; Cayetano, No. 10; and, Trillanes, No. 11.

Batch 20, the Sunday night update that Namfrel released just before 10 p.m., indicated that the quick count had already covered 37.76 percent or 84,876 of the 224,748 precincts nationwide.

Since Saturday night, Namfrel has verified and included in its latest tabulation entries from Metro Manila, Region 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, Caraga and the Cordillera Administrative Region.

Also since Saturday night, the placements of Cayetano, Trillanes, Pimentel and Zubiri have been very erratic.

Zubiri, after climbing to No. 10 late Saturday dropped to No. 11 early Sunday before settling at No. 13.

Cayetano who was at No. 11 Saturday night and climbed up to No. 10 early yesterday and stayed there until last night.

Trillanes, after hovering at the last slot of the Magic 12 Saturday, dropped to No. 13 and climbed two notches at No. 11

Pimentel moved from No. 13 Saturday night to No. 12 the following morning and stayed there until last night. *With reports from Maan Festejo and Kathleen Olarte*

Why 3 Kapatiran bets lost

From page A1

doctor for many years in the United States who returned to the Philippines last year. "Very few people knew about us."

Matter of strategy

Paredes said there was even the impression among some people that Kapatiran was running as a party-list group. "That's how bad the awareness problem was," he said.

He attributed the problem to bad political strategy "or the lack of one" by the party leadership.

"They're all good-natured, but they were all naive, apparently because they're not politicians," he said. "The impact of our advocacy was great but this wasn't translated into votes."

Paredes said Kapatiran lost primarily because it failed to properly present its advocacy in an arena where such a strategy was key.

Meager funds

"People bought the old products even if they were bad simply because of the nice packaging," he said, referring to familiar names topping the senatorial race in the unofficial counts.

"In our case, we had a good product with a bad packaging."

The lack of a sound strategy was apparent in instances when newspaper ads seeking campaign fund donation failed to mention the names of Kapatiran's senatorial candidates, he said.

Wrong focus

With an overall campaign kitty of only around P3.5 million, Paredes said he and his fellow candidates were unable to cover even a third of all the country's provinces.

At the start of the campaign, Kapatiran relied heavily on the quiet support of the Roman Catholic Church, noting that it was the only party that clearly embraced the social teachings of the Church.

But come crunch time, "our allies in the Church didn't deliver," according to Paredes.

"A few bishops did their thing, but many others preferred to keep silent," he said.

Paredes said the party was also partly at fault for focusing on the Catholic leadership, meaning the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines, instead of inviting strong support from the grass roots. He was referring to the Basic Ecclesial Communities, or BECs, the smallest Church unit found in every barangay.

No regrets

Understandably, many bishops preferred not to actively campaign for Kapatiran because to do so would have violated the principle of allowing the laity to take the lead in a political undertaking, he said.

"In this sense, we should have focused on the bottom, not the top, of the hierarchy," Paredes said.

On the eve of the election, Paredes said Kapatiran had a dinner party at the house of lawyer Mario Ongkiko, a top official of the group.

The dinner, on hindsight, became a celebration: Kapatiran, in its own little way, had given birth to the idea that God has to be at the center of Philippine political life.

Cousins recycle campaign billboards into school bags

From page A1

She particularly cited senatorial candidates Juan Miguel Zubiri and Francis Escudero, who touted their proenvironment platforms during the campaign.

Clemente owns a printing company, Green Pine Print, while Pustrado is into garments.

Out-of-work sewers

As part of their companies' corporate social responsibility projects, Clemente and Pustrado began making bags out of billboard ads three years ago with the help of out-of-work sewers in Marikina City.

"Right now, we have a very humble start. We are hoping that the big companies will follow," Clemente said.

Aside from helping schoolchildren and unemployed women, the cousins are protecting the environment by recycling non-biodegradable materials that either will be burned or dumped.

World without waste

Clemente and Mother Earth chair Odette Alcantara said the recycled-bag project complied with the environmentalist policy of zero waste.

"With so many tarpaulins of the *trapos* [traditional politicians], how do you dispose of them?" she said.

The project teaches mothers and schoolchildren how to build a "world without waste," Alcantara said.

"We are trying to call attention to the limited resources of the world and teach the people about the importance of caring for the environment," she said in an interview.

To ensure that only few scraps are produced, the project has one master cutter who carefully cuts patterns from the plastic materials, according to Clemente. The project employs about 20 sewers.

Donated to schoolchildren

Clemente said her group was paying sewers P17 per bag. The bags are donated to schoolchildren in poor communities and calamity-stricken areas.

The project originally used billboard ads. After the recently concluded elections, said to be the most expensive yet, Clemente and her sewers were swamped with too many materials to work with.

"Can you imagine the tarpaulins all over Metro Manila? We are running out of funds, but we are not running out of materials," she said.

Gifts, giveaways

Clemente said she and her cousin started making bags out of the campaign materials three months ago, the start of the campaign period for senatorial candidates and party-list groups.

She described the billboards and tarpaulins to be ideal materials for bags, noting that they are durable and water proof. Because the inside lining is plain, her group can use it as the outside material, Clemente said.

Aside from the politicians, Clemente called on companies to save their billboard ads. She has been going to firms producing consumer goods to encourage them to participate in the recycled-bag project.

Companies, Clemente explained, could use the bags made from their billboard ads as gifts and giveaway bags, instead of using paper bags, which are not reusable.

Bush …

From page A1

relationship with Bush in interviews released on Saturday.

"I think as far as the adverse impact on the nation around the world, this administration has been the worst in history," Carter, a Nobel Peace Prize winner, said in a telephone interview with the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette from the Carter Center in Atlanta.

"The overt reversal of America's basic values as expressed by previous administrations, including (those of) George H.W. Bush and Ronald Reagan and Richard Nixon and others, has been the most disturbing to me," Carter told the newspaper.

In an interview on Britain's BBC radio, Carter also slammed Blair, who is set to leave office next month, for his tight relations with Bush, particularly concerning the Iraq war.

"Abominable. Loyal, blind, apparently subservient," Carter said when asked how he would characterize Blair's relationship with Bush.

"I think that the almost undeviating support by Great Britain for the ill-advised policies of President Bush in Iraq have been a major tragedy for the world," Carter said.

Carter, who served as US president from 1977 to 1981 and won the 2002 Nobel Peace Prize for his charitable work, was an outspoken opponent of the invasion of Iraq before it was launched in 2003.

In the newspaper interview, Carter said Bush had taken a "radical departure from all previous administration policies" with the Iraq war.

"We now have endorsed the concept of preemptive war where we go to war with another nation militarily, even though our own security is not directly threatened, if we want to change the regime there or if we fear that some time in the future our security might be endangered," Carter said.

Republicans strike back

The White House declined to comment on Carter's statements, but the Republican National Committee struck back at the former US president.

"Most Americans will probably take his criticisms with a grain of salt considering he also challenged Ronald Reagan's strategy for the Cold War, and history has since proven him wrong," said RNC spokesperson Amber Wilkerson.

Carter told BBC that if Blair had opposed the invasion, he could have reduced the ensuing harm by making it tougher for Washington to shrug off critics, even if the British prime minister had not been able to stop the war.

"It would certainly have assuaged the problems that have (arisen) lately," Carter said.

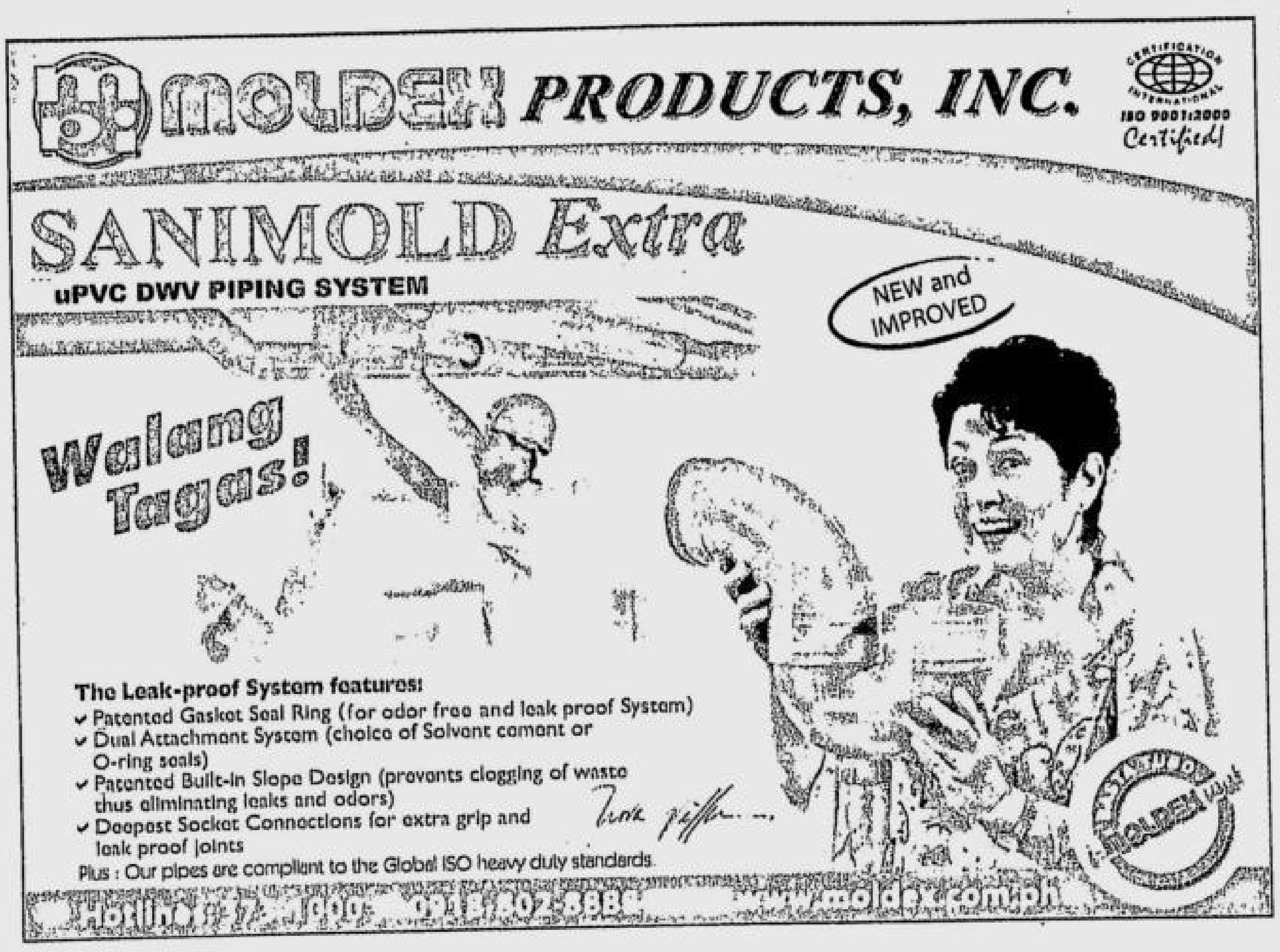
"One of the defenses of the Bush administration in America and worldwide … has been: 'OK, we must be more correct in our actions than the world thinks because Great Britain is backing us,'" Carter added.

"I think the combination of Bush and Blair giving their support to this tragedy in Iraq has strengthened the effort and has made opposition less effective and has prolonged the war and increased the tragedy that has resulted," he told the BBC.

In the newspaper interview, Carter, who brokered the Camp David accords between Egypt and Israel, also criticized Bush's Middle East policies.

"For the first time since Israel was founded, we've had zero peace talks to try to bring a resolution of differences in the Middle East. That's a radical departure from the past," Carter said.

Reuters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Late SPORTS

STA. LUCIA'S Norman Gonzales (second from left) and Kelly Williams (fourth from left) hound Coca Cola's Kenneth Duremdes during their PBA match last night. AUGUST DELA CRUZ

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Penny guides Bulls to top

GAMES WEDNESDAY (*Ynares Center*)
4:35 p.m.—Air21 vs Alaska
7:20 p.m.—San Miguel Beer vs Welcoat

By June Navarro

JAMES PENNY PRODUCED ANother monster game as Red Bull overcame Air21, 105-101, last night and seized the solo lead in the Talk 'N Text-PBA Fiesta Cup at the Araneta Coliseum.

Penny scattered 29 points and hauled down 19 rebounds in a performance that drew praises from coach Yeng Guiao, who has resumed calling the shots for the Bulls after getting re-elected as Pampanga vice governor.

Celino Cruz and Warren Ybañez complemented Penny's brilliance with crucial baskets down the stretch.

Cruz sank seven of his 13 points in the fourth quarter while Ybañez drilled in a pair of jump shots that softened up Air21's late charge.

"It happened too fast, we never expected to be No. 1 at this point," said Guiao, whose Bulls secured the lead with a 11-5 record.

With the win, the Bulls shattered the triple tie at the top with idle Alaska and Barangay Ginebra.

Arwind Santos shot eight of 10 from the field and six of six from the stripes to lead the Express with 25 points. Shawn Daniels added 15 points and 23 rebounds.

The Express, who controlled the first half, took their sixth defeat in 15 games and fell into a tie with the Talk 'N Text Phone Pals.

In the curtain-raiser, Alex Cabagnot and Kenneth Duremdes came down hard on their former team as the Coca-Cola Tigers whipped the Sta. Lucia Realtors, 114-95.

Duremdes pumped in a conference-high 23 points and Cabagnot added 19 points and 13 assists as the Tigers picked up their seventh win in 16 games.

"It's always a challenge to play against your former team," said Duremdes, the 12-year veteran who has suited up for four PBA teams. "I had the chance to prove that I can still play."

A three-pointer by Duremdes early in the fourth gave the Tigers a 10-point spread, 91-81, and jump-started a rally that had Jeff Varem and Cabagnot applying the finishing touches.

The scores:

First Game

COCA-COLA 114—Duremdes 23, Varem 22, Cabagnot 19, Antonio 17, Peek 14, Calimag 7, Tolomia 6, Sotto 2, Avenido 2, Arigo 2, Pacana 0.

STA. LUCIA 95—Williams J. 36, Williams 18, Omolon 17, Mendoza 7, Gonzales 5, Isip 4, Miranda 4, Aquino 4, Bughao 0.

Quarters: 28-26, 63-57, 84-81, 114-95

Second Game

RED BULL 105—Penny 29, Cruz 13, Valenzuela 13, Baguio 12, Sharma 10, Fonacier 6, Ybanez 6, Hrabak 5, Najorda 4, Alvarez 3, Bugia 2, Robinson 2.

AIR21 101—Santos 25, Daniels 15, Canaleta 15, Telan 13, David 11, Se 11 Arboleda 5, Andaya 2, Dimaunahan 2, Torion 2.

Quarters: 24-21, 48-56, 79-74, 105-101

Baby Tams overpower JRU five

FAR EASTERN UNIVERSITY OVERPOWERED Jose Rizal University, 90-83, yesterday to boost its chances for a quarterfinals slot in the junior division of the Nike Summer League basketball tournament at the FEU gym. Fred Lim scored 18 points and June Castillo added 13 for the Baby Tamaraws, who posted their fourth straight win.

Reelectionists win QC congressional seats

Losing bet's supporters heckle winner

By Jeannette I. Andrade

THE LOCAL OFFICE OF THE Commission on Elections in Quezon City yesterday proclaimed the winners in the congressional races in the city's four districts.

All the four newly elected representatives were reelectionists: Vincent "Bingbong" Crisologo (first district), Annie Rosa Susano (second district), Matias Defensor (third district) and Nanette Castelo-Daza (fourth district).

Each one posted a sizeable lead over their closest rival for the congressional seat before they were proclaimed the winners at 2 a.m. yesterday by the Comelec.

Immediately after she was declared the winner, Susano encountered some 30 supporters of her rival, Ismael "Chuck" Mathay III, outside the City Hall session hall where the canvassing of votes was being held.

According to members of the Quezon City Hall police detachment, Susano was making her way to her car when a group of people, whom they identified as Mathay supporters, heckled her.

The group accused her of cheating and bribing Comelec members to ensure her victory.

"*Mandaraya* (cheat)!" and "Comelec, *nabili* (The Comelec was bought)!," some members of the group reportedly shouted at Susano, the police said.

Stone-throwing

Despite the presence of policemen who were escorting her, the group then threw stones, candles and bottles of mineral water at the congresswoman.

The group only calmed down when more policemen arrived on the scene.

Susano was not hurt in the incident, the police said.

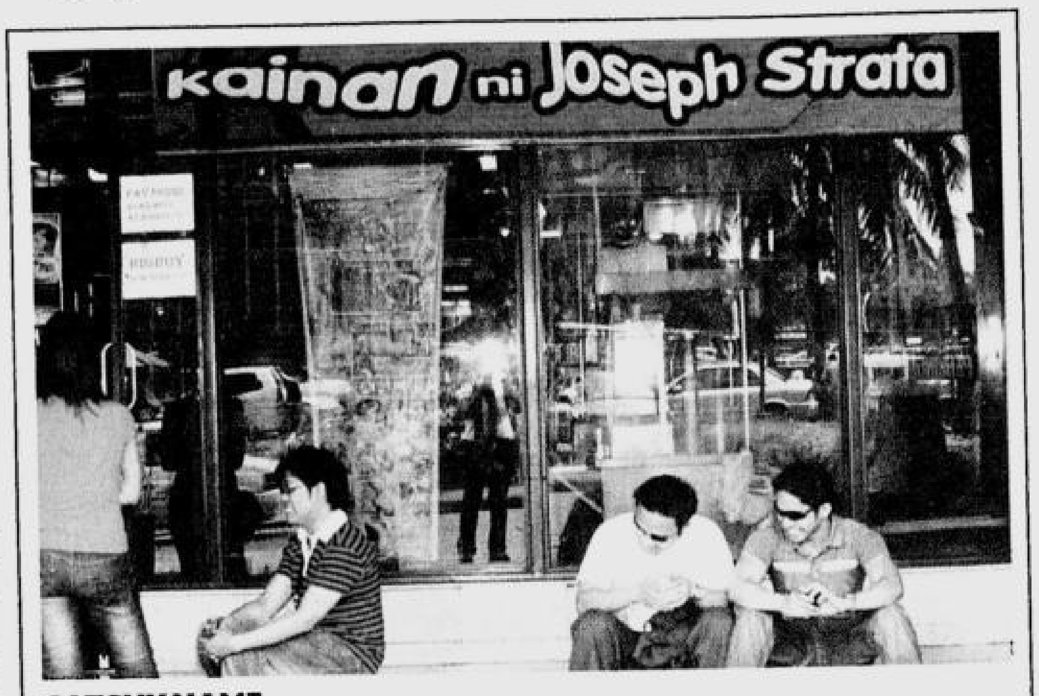
Mathay's supporters also reportedly complained about the haste with which Susano was proclaimed the winner with 20 percent of the canvassing yet to be completed. They also questioned why the winners were proclaimed at 2 a.m.

Local Comelec officials, however, explained that it was already mathematically impossible for Mathay to catch up with Susano in the tabulation of votes.

Based on the Comelec's tally before her proclamation, Susano had 88,747 votes over Mathay's 72,756.

Last Friday, Mayor Feliciano Belmonte, his running mate, Vice Mayor Herbert Bautista, were declared the winners in the mayoral and vice mayoral race, respectively.

As of yesterday, only the winning councilors for the city's four districts have yet to be proclaimed.



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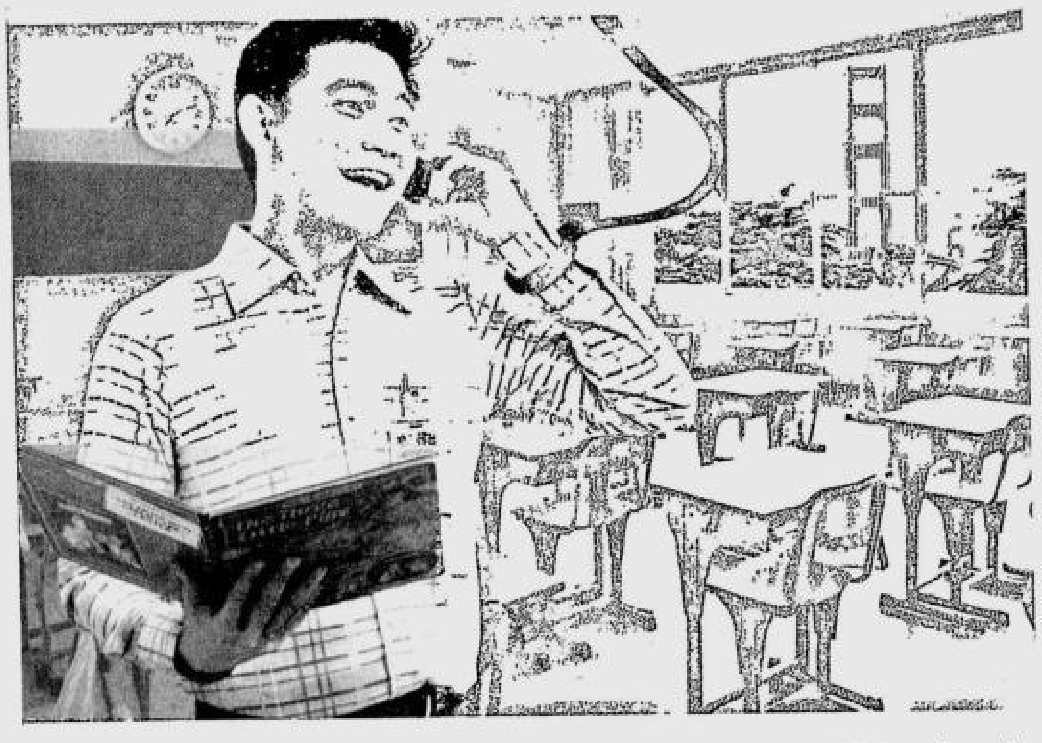
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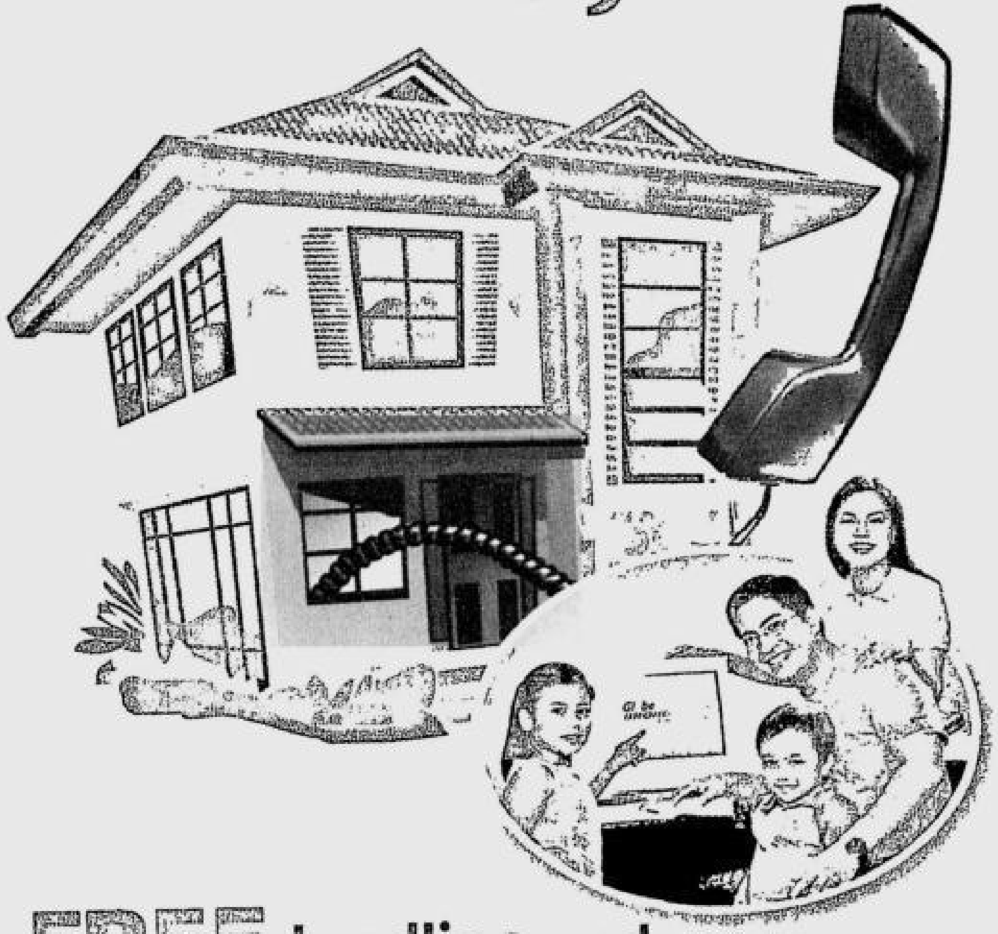
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Small bills only at MRT

I'M SO disappointed with the new policy of the Metro Rail Transit, specifically in their Taft Avenue station. They don't accept P500 and P1,000 bills! They posted a sign that says: "No change for 500 or 1000 peso bills. Please use smaller bills." How is this possible when the company earns hundreds of thousands of pesos a day? Please check on this. This is so inconvenient for commuters. Thanks in advance.

EDWARD GOROSPE, 29, Pasay City

Heavy traffic on Boni Avenue

PLEASE take action regarding the daily heavy traffic on Boni Avenue from the Pioneer tunnel, Barangka to the Rizal Technical University. Please cut down on the left and right turns in those areas and put at least two overpasses for pedestrians, and instill discipline among jeepney drivers with respect to loading/unloading rules. Thank you.

EMY, 31, Mandaluyong City

Wanted: Garbage cans in Baclaran

I REGULARLY pass by the Baclaran area and I see a lot of streetlights at night but I have never seen a garbage bin or trash can for people to use. There should be garbage bins in several places in the area.

AMELITO, 45, Tanza, Cavite

Dump beside deep well

MAY GINAGAWANG tambakan ng basura ang mga squatters sa Mayaman St. pero may katabing public deep well (There's an area on Mayaman Street that is being turned into a dump by squatters but it is beside a public deep well).

JULIE MARIANO, 50, Mabuhay cor. Mapagbigay Streets, Central Diliman, Quezon City

Illegal power connections

ILLEGAL power connections are still rampant in our area, particularly on St. Vincent Street, thus resulting in brownouts during weekends. Many complaints have been sent to Meralco but to no avail. Though they already have the list of violators, they just keep on ignoring it. Are they waiting for an accident to happen? Wake up, Meralco!

EM GUZMAN, 28, St. Vincent St., Holy Spirit, Quezon City

WATER GONE TO WASTE

From Nestor Lim, 60, Banlat Road, Quezon City: "Banlat Road at the corner of Pearl Street on Tandang Sora Avenue has been wet and slippery for more than a year now because of a leaking water pipe. Noisy and smoke-belching tricycles also pass by regularly. These tricycles should not be allowed to register if they have no mufflers. The noise and smoke pollution is just too much! The barangay hall is just close by, but no action has been taken on these two problems so far. Thanks for alerting the proper authorities." RYAN LIM

Tallying of votes suspended in Muntinlupa City

By Julie M. Aurelio

THE CANVASSING OF ELECTION returns in Muntinlupa City was suspended yesterday after two of the three members of the Board of Canvassers fell ill and had to be hospitalized.

BOC chair Ma. Lourdes Ugalino was brought to the Asian Hospital early in the morning.

On Saturday night, a member of the board, Fe Faz, was rushed to the Medical Center of Muntinlupa.

It was not clear what the two women were suffering from.

At yesterday's start of the canvassing, only BOC member Edwin Tagonon was present, forcing the suspension of the proceedings until the Commission on Elections can appoint replacements for the sick members.

This prompted congressional candidate, Ricardo "Dong" Puno, to express his concern over the "surprise move" of the BOC members.

"At a time when I am leading in the official count for three straight days, the members call in sick and this puts the canvassing on hold for an indefinite period," Puno said in a statement.

Puno, a lawyer and former broadcast journalist, is running in the Team Fresnedi slate against incumbent Muntinlupa Rep. Ruffy Biazon.

He added that two of the three members falling sick at the same time was highly suspicious.

Earlier, Puno filed a petition seeking the immediate relief and replacement of the three BOC members, whom he blamed for the slow pace of the canvassing.

He also asked the Comelec to suspend the proceedings and move it to its main office in Intramuros, Manila.

This was opposed, however, by Biazon. "The longer the canvassing will take, the higher the chance *dagdag-bawas* will take place," he said.

Millicent Desiderio, Puno's legal counsel, said they would not want to change the site of the canvassing if only the BOC members would speed up the pace of the canvassing.

Sought for comment, Biazon said in text message to the INQUIRER: "I'm not lagging behind. The last official Comelec tally places me ahead at 31,107 votes against Puno's 30,337 and the remaining barangays and precincts to be counted are my bailiwicks. Yesterday's count placed me higher."

He added: "I dare them to show their election returns that give credence to their claim of being the leaders in this election. As for the sick members of the BOC, I pray that they recover from their illness."

With Hershey D. Homol

Eusebio ready to reconcile with Jaworski

By Kristine L. Alave

NEWLY-PROCLAIMED PASIG CITY MAYOR Robert "Bobby" Eusebio yesterday said he is willing to forgive and make amends with his political rival, outgoing Rep. Robert "Dodot" Jaworski.

"The people of Pasig have spoken. *Vox populi, vox dei.* I'm appealing to my political opponents that this is not the time to hurl accusation at each other. *Tapos na po ang eleksyon at dapat magtulungan na lamang tayo para sa kapakanan ng mamamayan ng Pasig* (The elections are over and we should just help each other for the good of Pasig residents)," Eusebio said.

He will be replacing his father, Vicente, the incumbent mayor, after securing more than 9,300 votes against Jaworski. Eusebio was proclaimed at 5:45 a.m. last Saturday.

A defiant Jaworski, however, said he would protest the proclamation of his rival. He also described as "suspicious" the Board of Canvassers' decision to go ahead and declare Eusebio the winner despite his claim that there were many fraudulent election returns.

The canvassing, which was marred by cheating, Jaworski said, would make it hard for people to accept Eusebio as their mayor.

Credibility problem

"*Ang problema ngayon ni Bobby ay kung kikilalanin siya ng mga taga-Pasig bilang mayor* (Bobby's problem now is whether people in Pasig will recognize him as mayor)," Jaworski said.

Eusebio, meanwhile, dismissed the allegation of widespread fraud and cheating in Pasig City. "I do respect his feelings of losing in the election. But like what I said before and I will say it again, the election in Pasig City was very peaceful. There was no poll fraud as what my rival is claiming," the mayor-elect said.

Jaworski and his legal team last week filed at the Commission on Election a petition nullifying the contents of several election returns.

They contested 36 ERs during the canvassing and filed a petition to stop the canvassing of votes, temporarily halting the proceedings for an hour last Friday.

DID YOU KNOW

ON MAY 21, 1967, almost 400 members of an obscure sect called Lapiang Malaya marched to Malacañang Palace to overthrow then President Ferdinand Marcos. Holding bolos and bearing amulets, they charged into a group of policemen who blocked their path in Pasay City. After the skirmish, over 30 lay dead. Survivors of the group, including their leader, Valentin de los Santos, were later arrested for sedition. De los Santos was committed to the National Mental Hospital where he was mauled and killed.

Cyril L. Bonabente, Inquirer Research

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Couple who filed suit over cake lose case

By Leila B. Salaverria

THE COURT OF APPEALS HAS TURNED down a couple's plea for damages against a bakeshop which they claimed created a "gaudy-looking" cake for their wedding which caused them "embarrassment and humiliation."

In dismissing the petition of Edgardo and Stephanie Abenina, the appellate court said in its April 26 decision that the couple was not entitled to the P50,000 in damages that they sought for breach of contract because Merced Bake House Inc. was not guilty of fraud, negligence or breach of agreement when it made their wedding cake.

The couple sued the bakeshop after it allegedly made a "tawdry orange colored cake which was patently haphazardly done, leaning and gaudy-looking" for their June 1997 wedding.

According to the Abeninas, Merced did not follow the cake design and style which they had agreed upon. The couple had asked the bakeshop to copy a cake created by cake designer Heny Sison after they saw a picture of it in a magazine.

The case, however, was dismissed by the Quezon City Regional Trial Court in December 2000.

According to the lower court, the couple's stand was unreasonable since they wanted a duplicate of a more expensive cake at a low price. But the court ordered the bakeshop to refund the P4,775 the Abeninas had paid for the cake.

The couple, meanwhile, elevated the case to the appellate court.

In its decision, the Court of Appeals said there was no evidence that Merced intended to ruin the couple's reputation or cause them anguish.

It added that the couple would only be entitled to damages for breach of contract if there was bad faith or gross negligence on the bakeshop's part.

After their wedding, the couple had returned the cake to the bakeshop and demanded P20,000 in damages. Merced Bake House offered to refund their payment as a gesture of goodwill but the Abeninas refused and increased their demand for damages to P50,000.

HOT, HOT, HOT!
A woman shows her fire-eating skills during yesterday's celebration of the Caracol Festival in Baclaran, Pasay City.
RUDY ESPERAS

Binay to Palace: Stop harassment

By DJ Yap

IN THE WAKE OF HIS LANDSLIDE VICTORY, reelected Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay has warned the Arroyo administration to give up all efforts to evict him from office or face political suicide.

"It's possible that Malacañang will stop harassing me. (President Macapagal-Arroyo) must have exhausted all means already to unseat me," he told reporters in an interview Friday night.

"She should stop the confrontation and harassment already, since we're talking of only three years left," he added.

"Otherwise, everything will be affected ... If she pushes through with all this baseless harassment, she might not finish her term," Binay, also president of the United Opposition, warned.

"If they continue ... it will affect our way of life, our economy whether we want it or not. At this point, Ms Arroyo has become powerless," he said.

"Remember this is the second leg of her questionable tenure," he said at the sidelines of the Miss Makati pageant held at the Mandarin Oriental Hotel.

On May 4, Binay was served a suspension order in connection with a complaint filed at the Office of the Ombudsman by a political rival who had accused him of keeping ghost employees.

ELEKSYON 2007

NCR

Partial Comelec and Namfrel counts compiled by Metro Staff as of May 20, Sunday.*

CALOOCAN CITY	
*Based on encoded election results	
Mayor	
ASISTIO, Luis (NPC)	19207
ASISTIO, Macario (Liping Kalookan)	1054
ECHIVERRI, Enrico (Lakas)	21110
MALONZO, Reynaldo (Kabaka)	62552
UDHAY, Danilo (Ind)	128
Vice-Mayor	
CANAYO, Henry (Camayo)	12892
SARMIENTO, Cherry (Kabaka)	4292
VALERA, Luis Tito (Kampi)	27892
Congressman (1st district)	
ECHIVERRI, Recojudge Javier (Lakas)	6505
FUENTECILLA, Jose (KBL)	16
GARRA, Leo (Kalipunan ng Bagong Caloocan)	496
GUNDAYAO, Virgilio (Kapatiran Party/Ind)	27
MALAPITAN, Oscar (NPC/UNO)	12055
PLA, Nadine Mase Inez (Liping Kalookan)	656
Congressman (2nd district)	
APAR, Virgilio (KBL)	36
BAGUS, Tolentino (Lakas)	4765
CAJAYON, Maria Mitzi (LP)	7702
DAVINA, Nilo (Kampi)	5463
ERICE, Edgar (LP)	6154
MUÑOZ, Albert (Ind)	2688
MALABON-NAVOTAS	
Congressman (lone)	
FRANCISCO, Mandom (PMP)	22153
LACSON-NOEL, Josephine Veronique (NPC)	37609
SANDOVAL, Alvin (LP)	42521
NAVOTAS	
Mayor	
TIANGCO, Tobias (Partido Navoteño)	winner
Vice-Mayor	
JAVIER, Patrick Joseph (Partido Navoteño)	winner
MANILA	
Congressman (4th district)	
BONOAN-DAVID, Ma. Theresa (Kampi)	winner
Congressman (5th district)	
BAGATSING, Amado (Kampi)	winner
Congressman (6th district)	
ABANTE, Bienvenido Jr. (Lakas-	winner
MUNTINLUPA	
*Canvassing of votes suspended on May 20	
PARAÑAQUE CITY	
Mayor	
BERNABE, Florencio (Lakas)	73565
OLIVAREZ, Pablo (PMP/UNO)	43941
Vice-Mayor	
YLLANA, Andres Jose Jr. (Lakas)	49614
TAMBUNTING, Gustavo (Aksyon Demokratiko)	65829
Congressman (1st district)	
FERRER, Walinda (PDP-Laban)	11173
VARONA, Netz (Ind)	133
YABUT, Fortunato (Ind)	539
ZIALCITA, Eduardo (Lakas)	35196
Congressman (2nd district)	
ARROYO, Benjamin (UNO/Ind)	5594
GOLEZ, Roilo (Ind)	36072
NERY, Jose Sr. (Ind)	336
ROSAL, Pacifico (Ind)	761
ROXAS, Romeo	2223
PASAY CITY	
Mayor	
DY, CONSUELO (Kampi)	4007
TRINIDAD, Wenceslao (UNO/LDP)	4315
Vice-Mayor	
ALCERA, Greg (LP)	1308
CALIXTO, Antonio (LDP)	4598
TOLENTINO, Arvin (Kampi)	2144
Congressman (lone)	
PANALIGAN, Allan (Kampi)	29096
ROXAS, Jose Antonio (UNO/LDP)	2952
PASIG CITY	
Vice-Mayor	
MARTIRES, Rosali (Kampi)	winner
Congressman	
ROMULO, Roman (Kampi)	winner
QUEZON CITY	
Congressman (1st district)	
CRISOLOGO, Vincent (Lakas)	winner
Congressman (2nd district)	
SUSANO, Mary Ann (Lakas)	winner
Congressman (3rd district)	
DEFENSOR, Matias Jr. (Lakas)	winner
Congressman (4th district)	
DAZA, Nanette (Lakas)	winner

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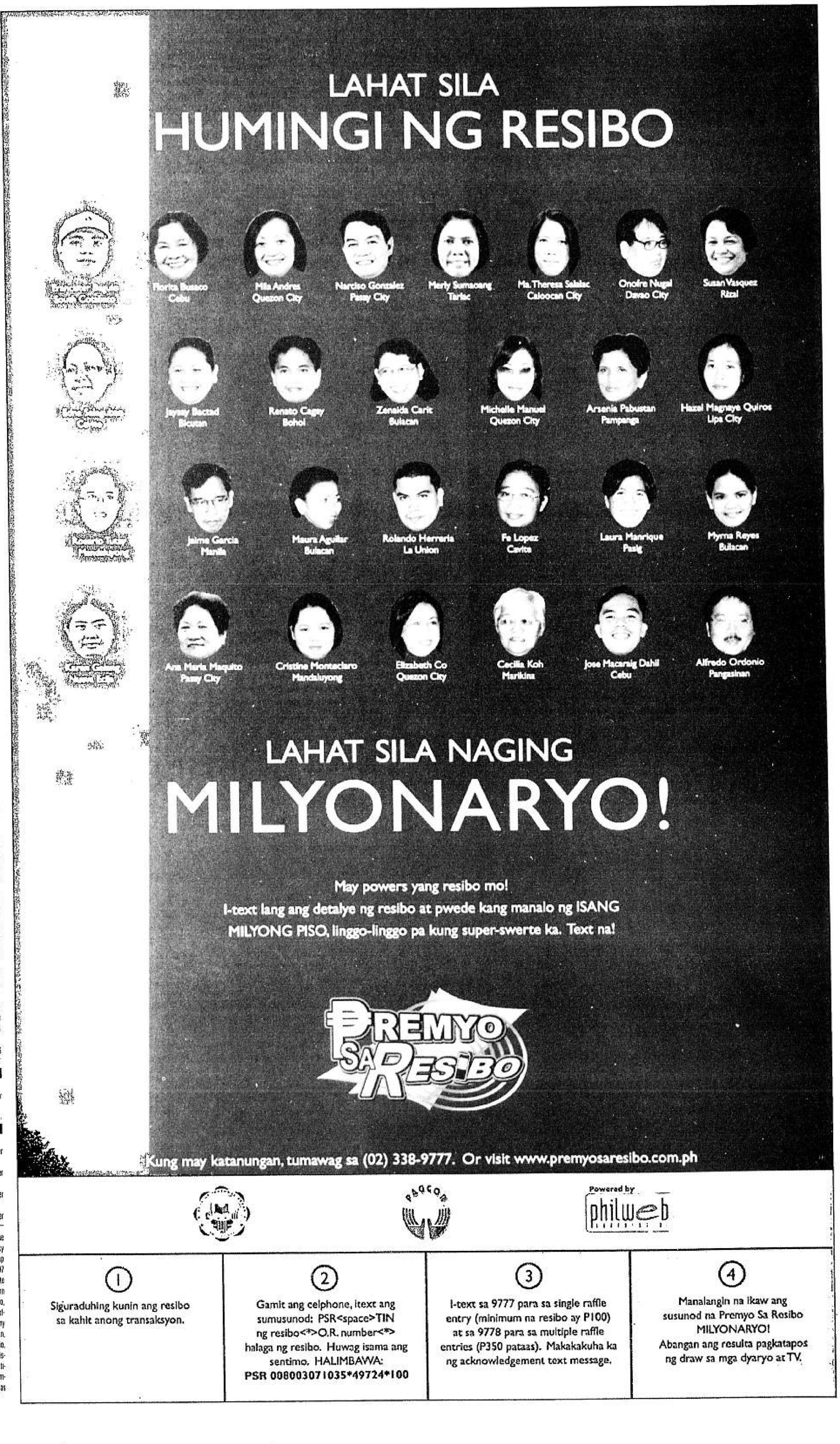

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Ana Maria Maquito, Pasay City
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New Gaza truce takes effect; Israel presses raids

GAZA CITY—RIVAL PALESTINIAN factions clinched a new ceasefire deal on Saturday to end a week of violence that has left more than 50 dead as Israel continued to pound Gaza, killing three Palestinians.

Gunmen began to abandon rooftop positions and to remove street barricades under the eye of Egyptian mediators and representatives of different factions, accompanied by the military adviser to Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas, Gen. Abdel Razzaq al-Majaida.

"The agreement has begun to be applied," Majaida told AFP after steps began to be taken around 1330 GMT. "The armed men are coming down from the tower blocks and the barriers are being removed."

It was the fifth such deal since violence erupted on Sunday but the first in which steps were actually taken to implement it.

The deal was struck at the Egyptian mission in Gaza in the presence of Hamas Prime Minister Ismail Haniya, who had been in contact with exiled Hamas political supremo Khaled Meshaal as well as Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and Abbas.

Gunmen had clashed in the streets of Gaza City earlier for a seventh straight day, although no casualties were reported and residents returned cautiously to the streets in several districts where the fighting has subsided.

And shortly after announcement of the new truce, but before it took effect, gunmen opened fire on the convoy of Gaza intelligence chief Gen. Mohammed al-Masri, causing no casualties, Fatah spokesperson Maher Maqdad said.

The fighting has killed a total of 51 people, six of them civilians, as Western and Muslim countries have urged calm.

Israel, meanwhile, continued its air and artillery bombardment of Gaza in a bid to curb the incessant rocket fire against its towns, which has intensified since the violence erupted between Hamas and Fatah.

A bombing raid on the town of Beit Hanun in northern Gaza killed two Palestinian and wounded five others, according to Palestinian medical and security officials.

In the evening another Palestinian was killed during a raid on the Jabalia refugee camp, one of four other attacks carried out by the Israeli airforce in which another Palestinian was wounded.

Defense Minister Amir Peretz said that while the Army would continue operations to curb rocket fire, Israel did not intend to carry out an extensive ground offensive in Gaza, which it quit in 2005 after a 38-year presence. *AFP*

AN ARMED militant of the Palestinian Islamist group Fatah al-Islam shoulders an RPG launcher and holds a copy of the Koran in a refugee camp in north Lebanon on March 21. AFP

11 dead as Lebanese troops battle militants

TRIPOLI, LEBANON—ELEVEN people were reported killed in fierce fighting between Lebanese soldiers and Palestinian Islamic extremists accused of links to al-Qaida on Sunday, the bloodiest such clashes in years.

The battles erupted at dawn on the streets of Lebanon's northern port city of Tripoli and inside the neighboring Palestinian refugee camp of Nahr al-Bared, an AFP reporter said.

Seven Lebanese soldiers and four militants from the Islamist extremist group Fatah al-Islam were killed, the head of Lebanese Security Forces Gen. Ashraf Rifi told AFP.

Fighting also erupted on several streets in Tripoli, Lebanon's second largest city after the capital Beirut.

Although the clashes were reported to have died down later, troops were continuing to hunt for militants hiding out in Tripoli, where soldiers in jeeps and at least one tank were seen rolling through the streets and plumes of smoke billowed into the sky.

A Palestinian source said at least 15 people were injured in the gunbattles around the Nahr al-Bared camp, a stronghold of Fatah al-Islam.

Rifi reported seven injured among the security forces.

In Beirut, the head of the anti-Syrian parliamentary majority Saad Hariri issued an appeal for calm and called for the population of Tripoli, a mainly Sunni city, to cooperate with the Lebanese army.

By longstanding convention, the Lebanese police and army do not enter Lebanon's 12 refugee camps, leaving security there to Palestinian militant groups.

Lebanese authorities have accused Fatah al-Islam, a Palestinian splinter group which is ideologically close to the al-Qaida network of Osama bin Laden, of working for the Syrian intelligence services.

The group was also accused of carrying out bus bombings in a mountainous Christian area north of Beirut in February that left three people dead.

But Fatah-Islam denied any involvement. *AFP*

Ghosts wail as Cambodians plunder killing field graves

By Seth Mydans

SRE LEAV, CAMBODIA—RESEARCHERS ARE examining a long-unknown killing field in Cambodia with the graves of thousands of victims of the Khmer Rouge from the 1970s.

But local villagers found it first. By the time the researchers arrived in early May, some 200 graves had been dug up and the bones scattered through the woods by hundreds of people hunting for jewelry.

"Everyone was running up there to dig for gold, so I went too," said Srey Net, 50, describing what seems to have been a communal frenzy that seized this poor and isolated village. "If they can dig for gold, why can't I?"

It was the first such raid the researchers had recorded in the thousands of burial grounds they have documented around the country. Altogether 1.7 million people died from 1975 to 1979 from starvation, overwork and disease as well as torture and execution.

"People said, 'This goose has no owner,'" said Ouk Souk, 60, a farmer. Few valuables were in the graves, but villagers took whatever they could find.

The invasion of what has been almost sacred ground suggests that past traumas are starting to fade even as Cambodia prepares to begin a long-delayed trial of some Khmer Rouge leaders, said Youk Chhang, a leading expert on the period.

Youk Chhang heads the Documentation Center of Cambodia, which has researched the killing fields and amassed a huge archive on the Khmer Rouge years. Visiting here on Thursday, two of his investigators said there could be as many as 9,000 bodies buried in the woods behind this village 100 miles south of Phnom Penh.

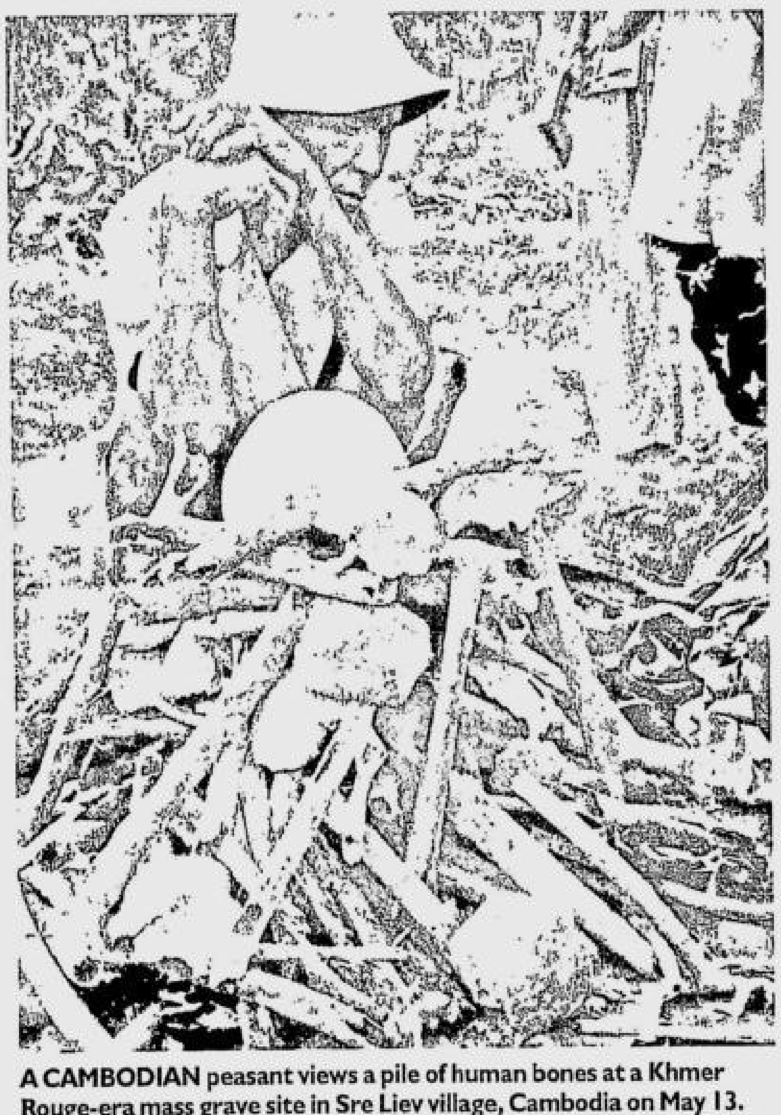
Though the pain of the past may have faded, the bones and the ghosts of Khmer Rouge victims still terrify many rural people. After the assault on the burial ground, this little village seemed filled with remorse and dread.

The digging has stopped and several people said they had been awakened at night by screams from the graves.

"People heard voices calling out, 'Help me! Help me!'" said Svay Saroeun, 50, a deputy village chief. "Maybe they are angry at the villagers for digging up their graves. Or maybe they were tortured to death, and now they are being tortured again by people who are disturbing their sleep."

Srey Noeun, 47, a farmer with four small children, said she could not sleep for three nights after digging two small gold earrings out of a grave.

"I'm afraid that the owner will take revenge on me because she died with nothing but her earrings and now I have taken them," Srey Noeun said. "She'll say, 'Please give them back. They are all I had.'" *New York Times News Service*



A CAMBODIAN peasant views a pile of human bones at a Khmer Rouge-era mass grave site in Sre Liev village, Cambodia on May 13. The villagers have ransacked the graves looking for gold hidden in the remains of people who died or were executed during the Khmer Rouge rule. AP

Romanians block plans to impeach their president

BUCHAREST—ROMANIANS REJECTED ON Saturday a move by parliament to impeach reformist President Traian Basescu in a referendum which gives the suspended president a mandate to revive his anticorruption drive.

Two exit polls released after voting ended at 8 p.m. showed between 75 and 78 percent voted "no" to plans to impeach Basescu.

Exact turnout figures were not available but were likely to be just below 50 percent, slightly lower than in the 2004 presidential election. Official results are due on Sunday.

Parliament suspended Basescu as president last month and called the referendum on the grounds he had overstepped his authority and pushed the European Union newcomer into a political deadlock.

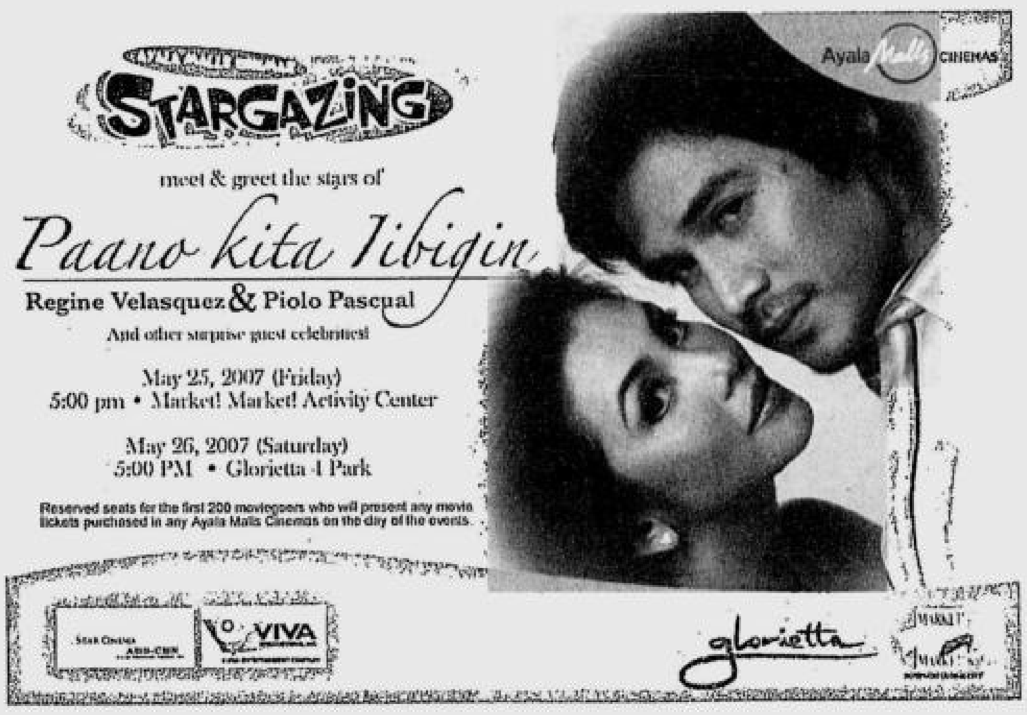
His opponents have also accused Basescu of using the secret services to discredit them.

No proof of this has emerged, while many Romanians see the ex-sea captain as an anticorruption crusader and a symbol of their long-frustrated goal of rejoining the European mainstream.

Soon after the voting ended, thousands of Romanians gathered at Bucharest's University Square to celebrate and demand that Basescu's opponent, Prime Minister Calin Tariceanu, step down.

"Down with Tariceanu, down with Tariceanu," they chanted.

Basescu has long called on his erstwhile ally to resign and call early elections. *Reuters*



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No result from US hunt for Bin Laden

WASHINGTON—A MAJOR HUNT for al-Qaida founder Osama bin Laden launched by the US Central Intelligence Agency last year has produced no significant leads on his whereabouts, The Los Angeles Times reported on its website Saturday.

But citing unnamed senior US intelligence officials, the newspaper said it has helped detect a significant increase in the movement of al-Qaida operatives and money from Iraq into Pakistan's tribal territories.

In one of the most troubling trends, US officials said that al-Qaida's command base in Pakistan is being increasingly funded by cash coming out of Iraq, the report said.

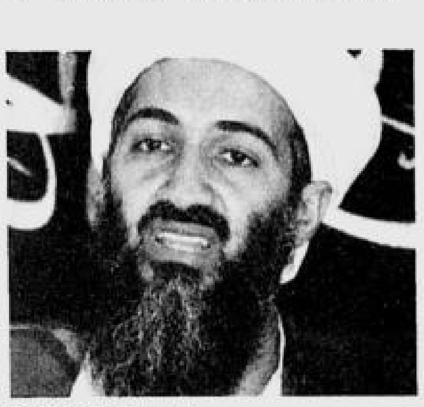
Al-Qaida operatives in Iraq are raising substantial sums from donations to the anti-American insurgency as well as kidnappings of wealthy Iraqis and other criminal activity, according to the paper.

The influx of money has bolstered al-Qaida's leadership ranks in Pakistan, The LA Times said.

The trend also signaled a reversal in the traditional flow of al-Qaida funds, with the network's leadership surviving to a large extent on money coming in from its most profitable franchise, rather than distributing funds from headquarters to distant cells, The LA Times said.

Little more than a year ago, al-Qaida's core command was thought to be in a financial crunch, according to the report. But US officials said cash shipped from Iraq has eased those troubles.

"Iraq is a big moneymaker for them," the paper quotes a senior US counterterrorism official as saying.



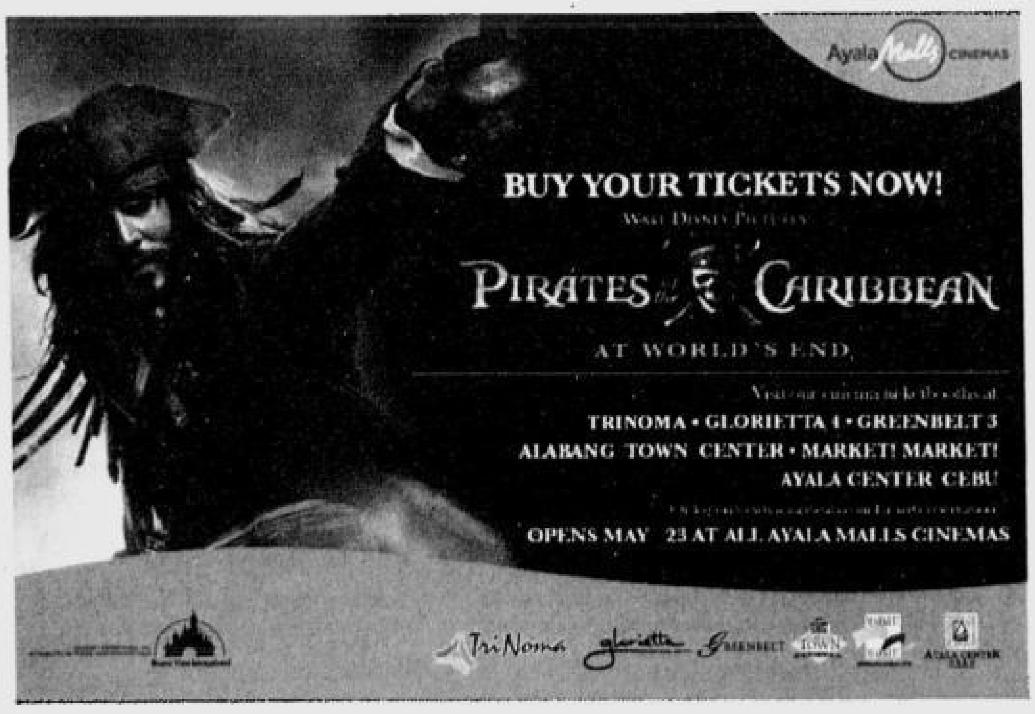
OSAMA bin Laden REUTERS

The CIA deployed as many as 50 clandestine operatives to Pakistan and Afghanistan—a dramatic increase over the number of CIA case officers permanently stationed in those countries, the paper said.

All of the new arrivals were given the primary objective of finding what counterterrorism officials call "high value targets," meaning Bin Laden and al-Qaida's number two, Ayman al-Zawahiri, according to the report.

Nevertheless, US intelligence and military officials said the surge has yet to produce a single lead on Bin Laden's or al-Zawahiri's location that could be substantiated, The LA Times said.

"We're not any closer," the report quotes a senior US military official as saying. *AFP*



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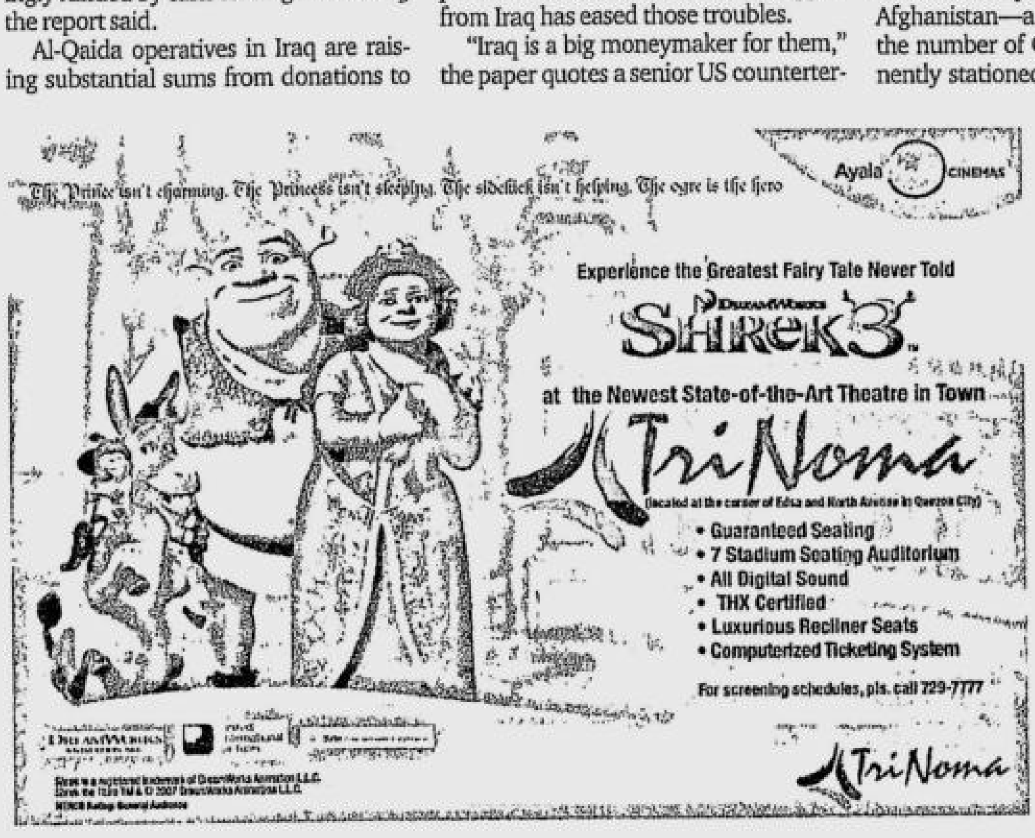

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All sectors unite to fight bird flu

In a country that seems divided over every issue, it's refreshing to see how the threat of bird flu has brought varied sectors together.

IWAS BIRD FLU
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FEB
FLU

Since the bird flu outbreaks in 2003 in several Asian countries, the government and various private sector entities have embarked on an increasing number of efforts to shield our shores. Spearheaded by the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Health, the National Avian Influenza Task Force (NAITF) has brought together not only government agencies in agriculture, health, natural resources, local government, disaster management, finance and media information, but poultry industry representatives, veterinary experts and foreign aid agencies as well.

The NAITF's efforts have so far focused on sustaining surveillance activities in critical areas of the country, and educating and training Local Government Units (LGUs) and poultry stakeholders. They've also stepped up controls against illegal importation of live birds and processed poultry products from countries banned due to bird flu.

Many other sectors and organizations have helped, each in their own way. The Corporate Coalition against Bird Flu is urging and helping big companies prepare contingency plans for a possible pandemic. Other governments like Japan have also helped.

Groups like the WHO, FAO, UNICEF, and the Philippine Press Institute (PPI) have focused on education and awareness. UNICEF has adopted NAITF's program called, "Bird Flu, Kayang Iwasan, Kayang Pigilan", turning its efforts towards children —a segment found to be very susceptible to bird flu, based on the experiences of affected countries.

On the other hand, the PPI has introduced a training program for journalists. Given the technical nature of bird flu and of pandemics, deep knowledge and understanding will be needed to accurately report on developments.

LGUs have pledged financial and logistical support. Local officials and veterinary authorities have eagerly attended training sessions, especially in regions where migratory birds are seasonally plentiful or where there are large broiler, layer, and duck populations. They want to find out how best to protect their constituency's livelihood activities, and prepare for any future incidence of bird flu within their localities.

(Materials and other information are available at www.iwasbirdflu.com).

President GMA herself has pledged to release funds to implement measures preventing the entry of bird flu, as well as to prepare the resources necessary to cope with a possible outbreak.

And this spirit of unity—fostered by the fear of bird flu—extends beyond our shores. Countries constantly bickering on trade and foreign policy have been sharing manpower, resources, and information to further combat bird flu. President GMA promised help to Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono in educating the Indonesian health sector. A team of six highly-trained government veterinarians was formed and dispatched immediately. In a recent ASEAN Summit, one of the key decisions was to organize a united stand against bird flu.

The beauty of this whole effort is in how we didn't have to come to a crisis to realize the need to come together. Whatever disputes have been set aside, and it may make all the difference.

The Philippines is one of the last bird flu free countries in Asia, and is hanging by a thread. But with the various sectors, and countries, all pulling together and holding on, it just might not break.

From the People of Japan
NAITF National Avian Influenza Task Force
Department of Agriculture
Bureau of Animal Industry
Department of Health
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
unicef

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- Nasal discharge
- Coughing, sneezing
- Incoordination
- Diarrhea

Tips on how to protect yourself from Bird Flu

- **Practice proper hygiene.**
  Practice proper hand-washing before and after handling poultry.
- **Protect the children.**
  Do not allow children to play with the birds.
- **Protect yourself and your workers.**
  Wear proper protective clothing and vaccinate workers and handlers when possible.
- **Protect your neighbors.**
  Report cases of sick, dying, or dead birds to the bird flu hotline or to your local veterinary clinic.

Call the Bird Flu Hotline:
925-9999

PRINCE Harry in May 14, 2006 photo. AFP

Now, it may be Afghan duty for Prince Harry

LONDON—BRITAIN'S PRINCE Harry, who was last week stopped from joining his regiment's deployment to Iraq, could be sent to join troops in Afghanistan, a newspaper said Sunday.

News of the World said it had information about plans for the 22-year-old officer, third-in-line to the throne, to join the fight against the Taliban, but was withholding key details.

Harry is a second lieutenant in the elite Blues and Royals regiment of the British Army's Household Cavalry, responsible for 11 soldiers and four Scmitar reconnaissance vehicles.

Army chief Gen. Sir Richard Dannatt blocked him from being sent to southern Iraq, due to threats against his life that would put his men in "unacceptable" danger.

News of the World said that insurgents planned to hit both British camps in southern Iraq with chlorine bombs—which kill victims by burning their lungs—to be certain of getting the prince.

Harry, known as Cornet Wales in the Army, is set to be posted to Afghanistan before 2008 and would carry out low-risk operations and earn a campaign medal after serving for 30 days, Britain's biggest-selling newspaper said. *AFP*

Chavez seeks Pope's apology for offending native peoples

CARACAS—PRESIDENT HUGO CHAVEZ SOUGHT BENEDICT XVI's apology for offending native peoples during the Pope's recent attempt to reach out to Latin American Roman Catholics.

"As a head of state, I beg your Holiness to apologize to the peoples of our Americas," said Chavez, speaking late Friday.

"I believe it is the right thing to do."

Benedict XVI made quite an impression on his first visit to Latin America, home to about half of his flock, when he said last week that "Christianity was not imposed by a foreign culture." "Christ was the Savior (America's natives) silently yearned for," the Pope said in Brazil.

Benedict also called a recent resurgence of pre-Columbian religions "a step backward," drawing protests from native peoples as far away as Mexico.

Natives in Ecuador also questioned Benedict's version of events.

"Surely, the Pope does not know that representatives of the Catholic Church of those times, with honorable exceptions, were accomplices, deceivers and beneficiaries of one of the most horrific genocides of all humanity," the Confederation of Indigenous Nations said in a statement Saturday.

The Pope's statements were still on Chavez's mind Saturday: "How could you say that they came—when they came with arquebuses (firearms) to evangelize—with no sort of imposition?"

The conquest of Latin America by Europeans "was something far worse than the Holocaust in the Second World War and no one can deny it, not even your Holiness can deny the Holocaust of the natives of our land."

"Christ arrived much later to America; he did not arrive with (Christopher) Columbus. That was the arrival of the anti-Christ," said Chavez, whose speeches frequently rely on Christian teachings and baseball metaphors.

Chavez has met once with Benedict, in May 2006. *AFP*

Catholics say blog spreads BBC 'slander'

ROME—ITALY'S LEADING ROMAN CATHOLIC newspaper lashed out at bloggers on Saturday for spreading "slander" by posting a BBC documentary that alleged a Church cover-up of child sexual abuse.

The documentary aired on the BBC in October, but never in Italy. The bloggers translated it and it now ranks as Google Video Italia's (www.video.google.it) most popular item.

"We did the patient work of translating and subtitling it to fill this shameful gap," they wrote at www.bispensiero.it.

Newspaper Avvenire, which is owned by the Italian Conference of Roman Catholic bishops, slammed the web version in a front-page editorial headlined "Infamous Slander Via Internet." The BBC documentary examined what it described as a secret document written in 1962 that set out a procedure for dealing with child sexual abuse within the Church.

It imposed an oath of secrecy on the child victim, the priest and any witness, a policy the BBC documentary said was meant to protect the priest's reputation during the investigation but "can offer a blueprint for cover-up."

Avvenire called the documentary "a potpourri of affirmations and pseudo-testimony that were at the time publicly repudiated" for being false and misleading.

The Roman Catholic Church has been hit in several countries, including the United States and Ireland, by lawsuits and allegations of sex abuse by priests.

British bishops last year criticized the BBC, saying it should be "ashamed of the standard of the journalism used to create this unwarranted attack on Pope Benedict." *Reuters*

RARE DISEASE
The jaundice yellow color of the skin of American child Eric Martin, 9 (left, with his healthy little brother) is from a rare genetic disorder called Crigler-Najjar syndrome. Children with the deadly disease must spend 10 to 12 hours a day, undressed, under intense blue lights. AP

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SAN MIGUEL-RP center Asi Taulava (right) trades jokes with a member of Iran's Saba Battery squad prior to the Filipinos' match against Syria's Al Jalaa. FIBAASIA.NET

Syria relegates RP five to fight for third place

Whistle-happy refs foil Pinoys

TEHRAN—A SUDDENLY LISTLESS SAN Miguel-RP team yielded anew to Syria's Al Jalaa, 109-77, Saturday to see its title ambitions sink in the 18th Fiba Asia Champions Cup at the Azadi Stadium here.

Guard Michael Mandaly shredded the RP defenses for 34 points and Brazilian co-import Eduardo Farhat added 26 points and 11 rebounds to lead the Syrians' reprise of their 114-80 win over the Filipinos in elimination play last week.

And it did not help the Filipinos' cause that the Kuwaiti referee who worked their first three games, which all ended in defeat, was there again to spoil the flow of their offense.

The Nationals' win run thus ended at two, with their fourth loss in six matches relegating them to the battle for third place with the American-reinforced All Rayyan of Qatar last night.

The Filipinos had earlier snared the last quarterfinal berth over Bahrain's Al Muharraq before stunning heavy favorite and Group 1 topnotcher Blue Star of Lebanon to crash the semifinals of the eight-nation tournament.

But this time, sheer guts and grit could not tide over the only squad without an import here.

"We feel bad, but at the same time we're determined to salvage third," said RP coach Chot Reyes.

The last time the Filipinos saw action in the annual tournament, in Manila two years ago, they ended up fifth. That preceded the country's suspension from international play by the international basketball federation, Fiba.

The Syrians clash with host Iran's Saba Battery, a narrow 74-70 winner over the Qataris in the other semifinal pairing, for the championship.

Mark Caguioa topscored for the Nationals with 24 points and Danny Seigle added 20. And, despite containing Syrian imports Bernard Jons and Julius Nwosu, they could not get their offensive rhythm going.

Fouls on Filipinos

Kuwaiti referee Mohammad Al Amiri officiated the game along with Finnish referee Petre Mantyla and the two looked too eager to call fouls on the Filipinos.

GAMES SUNDAY
2 p.m.—Lebanon vs. Kazakhstan (for 5th)
4:15 p.m.—Qatar vs. San Miguel-RP (for 3rd)
6:30 p.m.—Iran vs. Syria (Championship)
—

The Filipinos were slapped 32 fouls, including three technicals and two deliberates, compared to the Syrians' 15, just four for the entire first half.

Also, the Syrians were awarded 41 free throws to the Filipinos' 15.

"It could have been a great game, but each time we made a run, a foul or a violation will be called against us, stopping our momentum," said San Miguel-RP center Asi Taulava.

Caguioa, who fouled out after being slapped his second technical with 4:02 to go in the game, also blamed it all on the referees.

"Those referees took away our focus," he said.

Awe-inspiring win

"I was hoping last night's game didn't take too much out of us," said Reyes, referring to the Filipinos's 94-83 win over the Lebanese on Saturday.

Jons, who had a triple double of 22 points, 11 rebounds and 10 shot blocks the first time the two teams met, was held to only 11, 11 and two Saturday, while Nwosu managed only eight points and 11 rebounds.

Doing the most damage for the Syrians were Madanly and Brazilians Chueri and Farhat, who combined for all of Al Jalaa's 12 triples.

Syria easily broke off from the game's only tie at 10 with a 20-4 run anchored on Madanly's seven points. During that breakaway, the Filipinos lapsed into five misses and two turnovers.

The lead ballooned to 37-14 before Caguioa scattered 10 points as the Nationals came within 36-46. That proved the closest they would get.

The scores:

SYRIA 109—Madanly 34, Farhat 26, Chueri 12, Jons 11, Hadad 10, Nwosu 8, Sharif 6, Papazian 2, Correa 0, Eshak 0.

SAN MIGUEL-RP 77—Caguioa 24, Seigle 20, Pennisi 9, Raymundo 8, Helterbrand 6, Hontiveros 5, De Ocampo 3, Taulava 2, Alapag 0, Villanueva 0, Ritualo 0.

Quarters: 30-14; 54-42; 85-57; 109-77

Lascuña settles for 28th place

FILIPINO TONY LASCUÑA CLOSED OUT with a one-over-par 72 Sunday and settled for a share of 28th place in the rain-shortened Macau Open won in a playoff by Taiwanese veteran Lu Wen-teh at the Macau Golf and Country Club.

Lascuña, the only Filipino to make the halfway cut, wound up in an 11-way tie at 209, eight off Lu's winning pace in the $300,000 tournament.

The 44-year-old Lu edged Australian Richard Moir in sudden death after the two had finished with 201 totals.

Lascuna, who earlier fired rounds of 68-69, pocketed $2,397.

Moir forced sudden death with two late birdies for a 69 but fell short of a maiden Asian Tour title when he could only par the third extra hole.

India's Gaurav Ghei finished third, a stroke behind, after a 67 while China's Liang Wen-chong grabbed fourth place with a 66 to return to the top of the Asian Tour's UBS Order of Merit.

Asian Tour News

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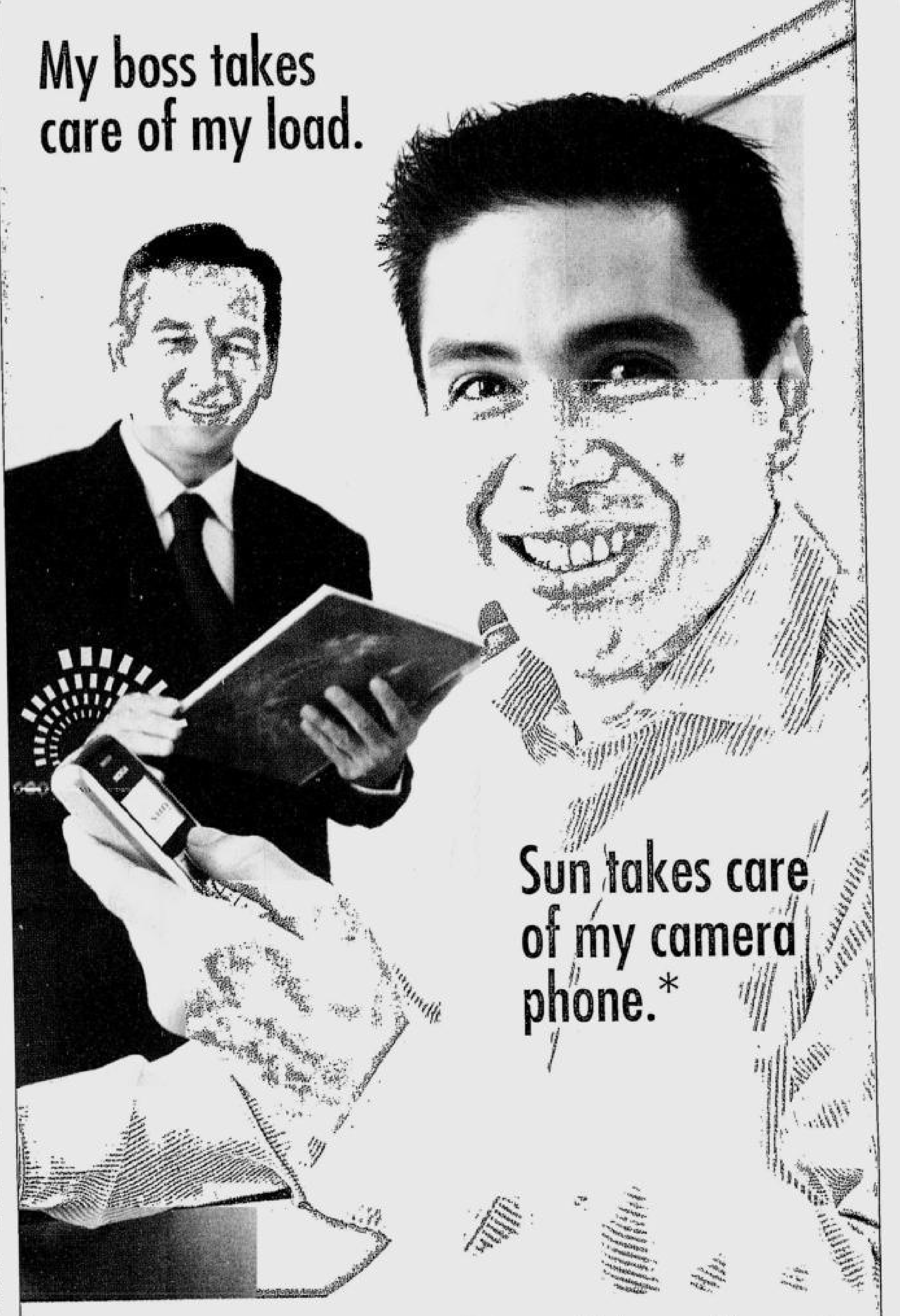
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Stage 4 Results

STAGE 4: Alaminos City to Vigan City

STAGE INDIVIDUAL

1. A. Quirimit, (Mall & More), 6 hours, 41 minutes, 5.43 secs
2. B. Ravina, (Cool Pap), 6:42:46.86
3. F. Feliciano, (Vellum), 6:42:57.70
4. R. Navarro, (Mall & More), same time
5. I. Valenzuela, (Cossack Vodka), same
6. R. Sambrano, (Cossack Vodka), same
7. D. Hardin, (Caltex), same time
8. F. Pablo, (Champion), same time
9. A. Miranda, (AIR21), 6:43:42.37
10. E. Atilano, (Cargohaus), same time
11. O. Villanueva, (Champion), 6:46:26.99
12. N. Guanzon, (U-Freight), same time
13. M. David, (Vellum), same time
14. K. Guinoo, (Vellum), same time
15. M. Aleonar, (Vellum), same time
16. E. Obosa, (Bacchus), 6:47:17.50
17. S. Carrera, (Caltex), same time
18. M. Ramos, (U-Freight), same time
19. V. Espiritu, (Wow Magic Sing), same
20. A. Calpito, (Bacchus), same time
21. E. Enrique, (Champion), same time
22. S. Barnachea, (Champion), same time
23. B. Luzon, (Cool Pap), same time
24. L. Reynante, (AIR21), same time
25. M. Reyes, (Cossack Vodka), same time
26. G. Apolinar, (Cool Pap), same time
27. J. Barantes, (Mall & More), 6:50:48.86
28. E. Ballezer, (Cossack Vodka), same time
29. H. Mangahis, (Cool Pap), same time
30. J. Duenas, (Mall & More), same time
31. C. Nadyahan, (Caltex), same time
32. A. Ricafort, (Wow Magic Sing), same
33. S. Diamsay, (Cargohaus), same time
34. J. Tolentino, (Caltex), same time
35. J. Calderon, (Caltex), same time
36. A. Benosa, (U-Freight), same time
37. H. Sicam, (Wow Magic Sing), 6:51:30
38. G. Asiado, (Wow Magic Sing), same

OVERALL INDIVIDUAL

1. A. Quirimit, (Mall & More), 13:24.00
2. B. Ravina, (Cool Pap), 13:25.52
3. F. Feliciano, (Vellum), 13:26.12
4. R. Sambrano, (Cossack Vodka), 13:26.22
5. E. Atilano, (Cargohaus), 13:26.54
6. I. Valenzuela, (Cossack Vodka), 13:26.56
7. V. Espiritu, (Wow Magic Sing), 13:28.49
8. S. Barnachea, (Champion), 13:28.59
9. D. Hardin, (Caltex), 13:29.25
10. E. Obosa, (Bacchus), 13:30.22
11. B. Luzon, (Cool Pap), 13:30.32
12. M. Ramos, (U-Freight), 13:30.33
13. M. Reyes, (Cossack Vodka), 13:30.36
14. L. Reynante, (AIR21), 13:30.40
15. A. Miranda, (AIR21), 13:30.42
16. F. Pablo, (Champion), 13:32.39
17. E. Enrique, (Champion), 13:33.18
18. M. Aleonar, (Vellum), 13:33.27
19. J. Calderon, (Caltex), 13:33.35
20. A. Benosa, (U-Freight), 13:33.54
21. A. Calpito, (Bacchus), 13:34.14
22. J. Duenas, (Mall & More), 13:34.16
23. J. Tolentino, (Caltex), 13:34.26
24. S. Carrera, (Caltex), 13:34.51.
25. H. Sicam, (Wow Magic Sing), 13:35.00
26. N. Guanzon, (U-Freight), 13:36.01
27. G. Apolinar, (Cool Pap), 13:36.46
28. K. Guinoo, (Vellum), 13:37.36
29. H. Mangahis, (Cool Pap), 13:37.38
30. J. Barantes, (Mall & More), 13:37.47

OVERALL TEAM STANDINGS

1. Cossack Vodka, 53:43:39.380 hours
2. Vellum, 53:44:36.421
3. Mall & More, 53: 45:23.600
4. Cool Pap, 53:47:04.759
5. Champion, 53:49.411
6. Caltex, 53:51:03.721
7. AIR21, 54:05:03.098
8. Wow Magic Sing , 54:05:05.879
9. U-freight, 54:06:52.692
10. Bacchus, 54:11:43.304
11. Cargohaus, 54:21:06.385
12. Vis-Min Team, 55:20:37.660

Quirimit seizes Tour overall lead

By Musong R. Castillo

VIGAN CITY—ARNEL QUIRIMIT COULDN'T HAVE PICKED A BETTER DAY to strike.

With his sights fixed on just bagging a stage, Quirimit yesterday became the third overall leader after four days of sun-scorched riding in the 2007 Tanduay Padyak Pinoy after the other big guns pedaled with seemingly heavy legs all day.

The 33-year-old Army sergeant booked the Tour's first solo finish, riding with the strength no one in the field could match in ruling the 267-kilometer grind from the tropical resort city of Alaminos in Pangasinan to this charming, age-old city deep in the north.

It was a stage that had climbs, sprints and rough stretches.

Quirimit, the 2003 champion, clocked six hours, 41 minutes and five seconds to leapfrog from eighth spot and claim ownership of the yellow jersey.

With a total time of 13:24:00.491, he stood a minute and 52 seconds ahead of Baler Ravina, who also finished second in the stage.

"My intention was just to win the lap," Quirimit, a native of Pozzorubio, Pangasinan, said in Filipino after cooling down, like the other riders, in the shower from a fire truck.

"I did not really expect to get the overall lead (after this stage)."

Victor Espiritu, the 1996 Tour winner who wore the yellow jersey for two days, floundered and dropped to seventh overall, now 4:48 minutes adrift, after checking in with an 11-man wave that came 6:12 after Quirimit.

"I felt wasted near the final 30 kilometers," Espiritu said in Filipino. "I could not break loose from the group (that included Lloyd Reynante, Joel Calderon, Santy Barnachea and Bernard Luzon).

"There's still time to get back."

Frederick Feliciano, the mountain specialist who was second to Santy Barnachea last year, finished third for the day and climbed to the same place in the overall race. He lay 2:11 off the pace, from 1:46 overnight, however.

"I tried to mount a breakaway, in the final 30 kms, I think," Feliciano said. "But I just did not have the legs to do it."

Barnachea, who started the day in second spot, just nine ticks behind Espiritu, also rued the tight marking in the middle of the race. But even if Quirimit now held the overall lead, the 31-year-old still has his eyes fixed on one target.

"We were all wasted in this lap," Barnachea said in Filipino. "I don't care whoever takes the yellow jersey and cracks the top 10 at this point. There are still a lot of things that can happen."

"But I still have my sights on Victor (Espiritu), because he has been eyeing me since the start (of the event)," added Barnachea, who plummeted to eighth overall, a rung below Espiritu, for coming in with that 11-man group.

Cossack Vodka skipper Renato Sambrano jumped to fourth from 16th overall after finishing in Feliciano's group for the stage. He stood just 2:11 off Quirimit's pace, and 37 seconds ahead of new fifth placer Emelito Atilano.

While the big guns struggled, there was an obscure rider that created a stir.

Leonardo Lingas Jr. led by his lonesome for the first 115 kms, even leading by as much as 11 and a half minutes at one stage, to set the longest-ever breakaway in recent memory of the event.

ARNEL Quirimit (left) and Baler Ravina, the new overall second placer, pop cellophanes of ice water in Bantayan, Ilocos Sur, 4 kms from the finish line of Stage 4. INQUIRER PHOTO/BOY CABRIDO

Cossack riders back in the driver's seat after 3rd-place windup

VIGAN, ILOCOS SUR—DEFENDING CHAMPION Cossack Vodka regained the overall team lead after a gruelling fourth stage of the 2007 Tanduay Padyak Pinoy from Alaminos to this vintage city.

The Cossack riders finished third in the 267-km journey, clocking a combined 27 hours, three minutes and 58.761 seconds to reclaim the spot they briefly lost to Cool Pap after the third stage on Saturday.

With a total time of 53:43:39.380, Cossack, coached by Renato Dolosa, now has a 57-second lead over Vellum, which topped yesterday's stage.

Skipper Renato Sambrano and assistant Michael Reyes carried the fight for Cossack. "We expected a shakeup in the team standings," Dolosa said.

GMA helps KO Pacquiao

BARE EYE

Recah Trinidad

CORRECTION PLEASE, IT WAS NOT A knockout Manny Pacquiao had suffered at the polls.

Well, it had looked every inch exactly like a cold-blooded stoppage.

But take it from Darlene Custodio, the wispy charmer who dealt Pacquiao the resounding defeat in their race for a seat in Congress.

The people have made an honest choice, Ms Custodio explained in a live television talk with Pia Hontiveros Saturday night.

It was as simple as that, the composed, sweet-faced winner tried to explain.

Sorry, but the loser could not seem to fathom the noble truth.

* * *

Based on the results, voters in South Cotabato did not find it hard to choose the rightful winner.

Custodio was ahead by nearly half the total of the votes counted at press time.

It may not be indeed a knockout loss for Pacquiao, as Custodio had tried to assure her adversary.

But there was one big problem here.

Pacquiao, as of yesterday morning, had refused to concede while most other poll losers—including mayoral aspirants he had fiercely endorsed in both Makati and Manila—have accepted defeat.

This, naturally, has put mighty and popular Pacquiao among ridiculous sorry losers who remained on hard floor long after everybody has gone home.

* * *

"*Lampas limangpo na ang bilang, ayaw pang bumangon* (The KO count has reached 50, but he's still on the floor)," quipped revelers during fiesta celebrations in Barangay Vergara in Mandaluyong City yesterday.

Indeed, the call of the day was for Pacquiao to get up and humbly accept defeat.

No, not necessarily to save face.

But that's what normally expected of honorable warriors.

It would make him a better man because, despite being a super hero, Pacquiao had just been made to realize that he can't win them all.

* * *

In the first place, hadn't he been reminded time and again that it was not the right fight for him?

Yes, Bob Arum tried to push him and even came to Manila to help out in the poll campaign.

But those who tried to dissuade Pacquiao from running for Congress had included sincere, trusted allies and advisers.

"It was useless telling him what was right, *siya talaga may gusto* (he really wanted it)," confided international fight manager Rex Wakee Salud of Cebu.

In a way, Pacquiao could not be blamed.

To repeat, he must've felt he had the perfect weaponry to beat Custodio, who was to run for her third straight term.

* * *

Money, popularity and, most importantly, Malacañang backing—he had everything at his beck and call.

But Pacquiao had obviously overlooked one thing.

As Custodio would explain, Pacquiao had seemed oblivious to the fact that the area they had contested was anti-GMA country.

It was an opposition bailiwick, the charming victor stressed.

No, this was not to say Pacquiao could've won had he not allowed himself to be both a lap dog of the President and a poster boy of Palace desperation.

* * *

"Pacquiao has no reason to feel bad," Custodio clarified, "this should not be taken to mean people did not love him."

Simply put, they still adore and admire Pacquiao.

It just so happen that, in his last big fight, he allowed himself to be identified with Malacañang wholesale when the dislike for GMA was at its fiercest.

There was no way he could have avoided being dumped.

Pacquiao walked blindly into a knockout when he refused to accept how much people have come to hate his beloved President.

He did play it very dumb and, as the streetwise loves to put it, there's still no known cure for this.

CITY OF ILIGAN
Website: www.iligan-city.gov.ph
E-mail: bac@iligan-city.gov.ph
Telefax No. (063) 225-3034
BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The City Government of Iligan through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites suppliers / manufacturers / distributors / contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the hereunder project:

Name of Project	Procurement of Branded Personal Computers
Location	CAD-ICTC, Iligan City
Brief Description	Supply and delivery of 200 units branded personal computers
Approved Budget for the Contract	P 6,800,000.00
Contract Duration	
Delivery Period	Within 10 calendar days upon receipt of Approved Purchase Order

Prospective bidders should have experience in undertaking a similar project within the last two (2) years with an amount of at least 50% of the proposed project for bidding. The Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference(s), Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulation (IRR).

The complete schedule of activities is listed, as follows:

Activities	Schedule
1. Issuance of Bid Documents	May 28-June 11, 2007
2. Pre-Bid Conference	May 29, 2007 – 1:30 p.m.
3. Submission of Eligibility and Bids	June 15, 2007 – 8:30 a.m.
4. Opening of Bids	June 15, 2007 – 9:00 a.m.
5. Bid Evaluation	Within 7 days after opening of bids
6. Post-qualification	Within 7 days after bid evaluation
7. Notice of Award	Within 7 days after determination of LCRB

Bid Documents will be available to prospective bidders upon payment of a non-refundable amount of P6,800.00 plus P100.00 for Eligibility Forms to the City Government of Iligan Cashier, at the BAC Office, 2nd Floor, City Hall Main Building, Buhanginan Hill, Palao, Iligan City.

The City Government of Iligan reserves the right to reject any or all bids and to waive any defects or informalities in the bids received without assigning any reason thereto.

Furthermore, the City Government of Iligan assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expense or loss incurred in the preparation and submission of the eligibility statements and bid nor does it guarantee that an award will be made.

Approved by:

(Sgd.) GIL R. BALONDO
City Planning & Development Coordinator
BAC Chairperson

(PDI – May 21, 2007)

CAMARINES SUR III ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.
(CASURECO III)
San Isidro, Iriga City
Fax No. (054) 299-2382

INVITATION TO BID

The Camarines Sur III Electric Cooperative, Inc. (CASURECO III) per requisite of Coop policies on Pre-Qualifications, and Bids and Awards invites all interested Bidders/Suppliers to apply for pre-qualification/eligibility and to bid for the Supply of KWH Meter on CONSIGNMENT BASIS and VAT inclusive, to wit:

10,000 units	KWH METER
Specifications	
Brand	TCC (Brand new)
Type	HLDOI
CLs	2.0, 2W, 1 0
Volts	240 V
TA	10 (30) Unidirectional
Form	IA

You may secure the Pre-Qualification Requirements from the Secretary of the Bids and Awards Committee, Finance Dept. CASURECO III, Iriga City anytime during office hours before the date of bidding.

Submission of Pre-Qualification Requirements shall not be later than 5:00 PM on May 30, 2007 and no documents shall be accepted thereafter. Only those who will be qualified will be allowed to participate in the bidding.

BIDDING will be conducted at 3:00 pm on JUNE 1, 2007. *Pre-bid conference will be on June 1, 2007 @ 9:00 in the morning coop function room. Sealed bid in duplicate copies should be submitted to the BIDS and AWARDS COMMITTEE on or before 3:00 PM of June 1, 2007. Five (5%) percent Bidders bond is required as a matter of policy. Payment of non-refundable bidding fee of P3,000.00. (Please bring sample).*

CASURECO III reserves the right to reject any or all bids, waive defect or informality therein, or accept any bid or offer which it may consider to be advantageous and beneficial to CASURECO III.

(Sgd.) MR. PERFECTO M. GASCON
BAC Chairman

Noted by:
(Sgd.) ENGR. PEDRO M. PRESTADO, JR.
General Manager

(PDI – May 21 & 25, 2007)

MercedesTrophy golf on; 3 Asian final slots staked

A FIELD OF 144 PLAYERS VIE FOR berths in the Asian tournament today in the second MercedesTrophy Philippines 2007 national eliminations at the Sta. Elena Golf Club in Cabuyao, Laguna.

The winners in the three divisions will earn slots in the MercedesTrophy Asian Final slated Aug. 15 to 17 at the Hope Island and Glades courses in Queensland, Australia.

The organizing Cats Motors, exclusive country distributor of Mercedes-Benz vehicles, said the three division runners-up will also join the Queensland trip.

Players with 0 to 13 handicap will be bracketed in Class A, 14-21 in Class B and 22-27 in Class C, said tournament director Emy Arcilla.

Scoring will be based on the Stableford System where a bogey is worth a point, a par two points, a birdie three points and so on.

Sponsors and special guests will play to a System 36 format.

Only Mercedes-Benz owners can play in the tourney, which was held for the first time last year through DaimlerChrysler South East Asia.

A Mercedes-Benz B-150 Compact Sports Tourer, Cathay Pacific business class tickets for two and a Canon EOS 5D full-frame 12 megapixel digital SLR camera are at stake as hole-in-one prizes.

"Cats Motors and the loyal Mercedes-Benz community are thrilled because we were accepted as the ninth member of the elite tournament," said Cats Motors chair Greg Yu and president Felix Ang.

Dr. Rainer Thiel, president and CEO of Daimler Chrysler Southeast Asia, will also see action in today's tournament.

PLDT Corporate Business Group SVP Ernesto Alberto (left) and CATS Motors president Felix Ang seal with a handshake PLDT's commitment as co-presenter of the 2007 MercedesTrophy RP tournament. Looking on is Julie Carceller, head of Smart Infinity BG.

Dazz stunner puts Harbour, CL in final 4

By Jasmine W. Payo

DAZZ 'SANG PATAK PULLED OFF A SHOCKER Saturday that propelled two other teams to the semifinals.

The cellar-dwelling Kitchen Specialists did the league-leaders a huge favor by spoiling Toyota Balintawak's early semifinal bid with an 86-73 decision in the PBL Unity Cup at The Arena in San Juan.

With the Road Kings' upset loss, Harbour Centre and Cebuana Lhuillier-Pera Padala's similar 8-2 records proved good enough for an automatic entry in the Final Four.

The Kitchen Specialists overcame the intimidating return of Fil-Am Joe Devance by banking on the stellar shooting of Reed Juntilla, who unloaded a game-high 22 points.

Devance, the Most Valuable Player of the same tournament last year, came off the bench late in the first quarter and debuted with 15 markers and four boards in only 15 minutes of action.

"I think I played pretty well, we just have to work on our defense as team," said Devance, the 6-foot-7 center who returned from the United States last Wednesday.

The Road Kings found consolation by keeping solo third place at 5-5, a record that still kept them a game ahead of other teams vying for the twice-to-beat incentive in the quarterfinals.

Under the league format, the top two teams at the end of the eliminations will earn outright semifinal slots, while the third- and fourth-ranked squads will clinch the twice-to-beat bonus in the quarterfinals. The team with the lowest record will be eliminated.

Dazz remained in the cellar with San Miguel-Magnolia at 3-7, yet coach Jun Noel believes the Kitchen Specialists are capable of reaching the next round after their improved form versus the Road Kings.

"We were not sure if Devance would play, but the win showed our preparation in our defense and offense," said Noel.

Juntilla fired seven straight points in the final period to widen the gap at 78-65, with 2:44 left.

Meanwhile, Doug Kramer earned the Player of the Week citation for his role in Cebuana Lhuillier-Pera Padala's five-game winning run.

Kramer averaged 11 points and 12.5 rebounds in his last two outings, but coach Luigi Trillo said his 6-foot-4 frontliner has been providing more than just numbers.

The scores:

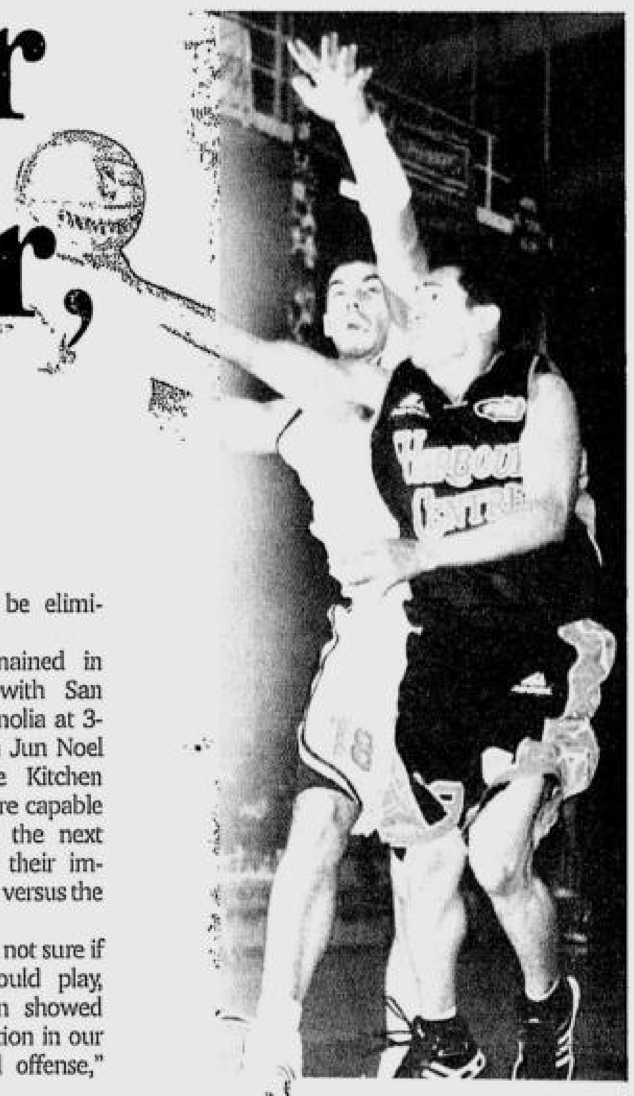
DAZZ 86—Juntilla 22, Moreño 11, Larong 11, Mercado 8, Bucao 8, Rodriguez 8, Sanz 7, Hugnatan 5, Bulel 4, Omandam 2, Almacin 0, Cenita 0, Labagala 0.

TOYOTA BALINTAWAK 73—Devance 15, Daa 15, Coronel 10, Cabahug 10, Rodriguez 5, Fajardo 5, Guerrero 4, Cruz 4, Alcaraz 3, Baluyot 2, Coching 0, Tan 0, Dedicatoria 0.

Quarters: 29-24, 51-42, 64-61, 86-73

STANDINGS	W	L
C. Lhuillier	8	2
Harbour	8	2
Toyota Bal.	5	5
Henkel Sista	4	6
Burger King	4	6
Dazz	3	7
Magnolia	3	7

GAMES TOMORROW
(Olivarez College Sports Center)
2 p.m.—Burger King vs Henkel Sista
4 p.m.—Toyota Balintawak vs CL-Pera Padala



PLAYER of the Week Doug Kramer (left) tries to stop Harbour Centre's Al Vergara during a recent match. ERIK ARAZAS

Knights survive Altas; Warriors pull off No.3

LETRAN GAINED A PLAYOFF FOR a Group B quarterfinal berth while University of the East remained unbeaten in Group A yesterday in the Filoil-Flying V Preseason Invitational Cup at The Arena in San Juan.

After a dismal start that saw both Letran and Perpetual Help scoring just nine points apiece, coach Louie Alas' Knights found their range in the second half to score a 71-69 decision.

Letran improved to 3-4 and gained a playoff for a quarterfinal seat.

Perpetual tasted its second straight loss for 1-3 and must sweep its last two matches to stay alive.

In the other featured match, the University of the East Warriors upended the National University Bulldogs, 76-72, to remain unscathed in three starts in Group B.

The Bulldogs dropped to 3-2.

The Knights picked up the pace in the third with swingman RJ Jazul scattering 11 points, helping Letran cut down the lead to four, 53-49, with just a full quarter remaining.

Jazul topscored for Letran with 18 markers and Miko Quinday made 11.

Raffy Inyon led Perpetual Helpo with a game-high 22 points while Nat Salanga contributed 11.

Inquirer Sports Staff

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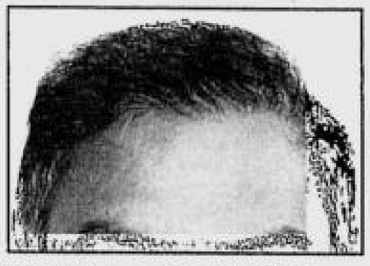

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Showtime

Spurs vs Jazz; Cavs vs Pistons

SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS—THE SAN ANTONIO Spurs and Detroit Pistons could meet in the National Basketball Association finals for the second time in three years but LeBron James and Carlos Boozer have other ideas.

The NBA best-of-seven conference finals open here Sunday with San Antonio playing host to the Utah Jazz in the Western series while the Eastern final commences Monday with James leading the Cleveland Cavaliers into Detroit.

The Spurs seek their fourth NBA crown in nine years, having won the title in 1999 over New York, 2003 over New Jersey and 2005 over Detroit in a seven-game thriller. San Antonio teams have never lost an NBA championship series.

The Pistons, in their fifth consecutive Eastern Conference final, are trying to reach the NBA Finals for the third time in four years. They beat the Los Angeles Lakers for the 2004 crown but fell a game shy in their defense bid.

"King" James averages 25.9 points, 8.1 assists and 7.8 rebounds a game and in his fourth NBA season is the dominant playmaker on a Cavaliers team that has reached the Eastern Conference finals for the first time since 1992.

"It's a great feeling, I'm not going to lie," James said. "This is one of the best feelings I've ever had. We've been talking about championship all year and now we're closer to what we want to accomplish."

Carlos Boozer leads the Jazz with 24.4 points and 12.3 rebounds a game. He was a former Cleveland teammate of James before signing a six-year, $68 million deal with Utah in 2004. *AFP*

NBA ON BASKETBALL TV – MAY 21
Game 1, Western Conference Finals
3:30 a.m. – Utah vs. San Antonio
(Replays: 8 a.m. & 9 p.m.)

UTAH Jazz will again lean on Carlos Boozer who averages 24.4 ppg. AP

Mets slip past Yanks, up 2-0 in Subway tiff

NEW YORK—THE NEW YORK METS trumped the cross-town Yankees, 10-7, on Saturday to take the first two games of their Subway Series.

David Wright hit a pair of two-run homers for the National League-best Mets (28-14) and Tom Glavine (5-1) notched his 295th career victory.

The hapless Yankees slipped into a tie for last place in the American League East after losing a game in which second baseman Robinson Cano made three errors and starter Darrell Rasner fractured a finger on his pitching hand.

"David had a big day, obviously, with the two big home runs," Mets skipper Willie Randolph told reporters. "We'll see if we can finish up tomorrow with the sweep."

Wright's second homer off lefty reliever Mike Myers, who replaced Rasner, bounced off outfielder Johnny Damon's glove and hopped over Shea Stadium's centerfield fence to give the Mets a 6-2 lead in the third.

The Yankees battled back and had the tying run at the plate in the ninth but eventually lost their third in a row and dipped to 18-23, 11 games behind the Boston Red Sox.

"I still can't believe I didn't catch it," a frustrated Damon said. *Reuters*

Taylor decisions Spinks to keep middleweight belt

NEW YORK—JERMAIN TAYLOR RETAINED his world middleweight title on Saturday with a lackluster split decision over IBF junior middleweight champion Cory Spinks in Memphis, Tennessee. Taylor (27-0-1) drew boos from a largely hometown crowd by landing few serious punches on Spinks (36-4), who was stepping up in weight and managed to avoid Taylor for most of the dreary 12-round fight. Taylor, defending his title for the fourth straight time, was ahead on two scorecards (117-111 and 115-113) but judge Richard Flaherty scored the fight 117-111 for Spinks. "He ran the whole time. I couldn't get my punches right," Taylor said. "You can't take a championship running. You want to beat the champ, fight the champ." *Reuters*

Republika ng Pilipinas
Republic of the Philippines
Kagawaran ng Tanggulang Pambansa
Department of National Defense

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

(PROCUREMENT OF AFP DEFENSE EQUIPMENT)

1. The Department of National Defense (Armed Forces of the Philippines), through the *AFP Modernization Program Act Trust Fund* and the *Department of Energy-Transferred Fund*, intends to apply the sum of ***NINE HUNDRED FORTY THREE MILLION SIX HUNDRED THIRTY FOUR THOUSAND FOUR HUNDRED SIXTY PESOS (PhP943,634,460.00)*** being the total *Approved Budget for the Contract* (ABC) to payments under the contract for the Night Fighting System (NFS) Acquisition Projects of the Armed Forces of the Philippines Defense Equipment.
2. The DND/AFP now invites Bids from eligible Bidders for the bidding of the following AFP defense equipment, with the respective cost of bidding documents per project, as follows:

Name Of Project	Lot	Approved Budget of the Contract	Cost of Bidding Document
1. PA/PAF Night Fighting System (NFS) Project	Lot 1-2	Php617,125,460.00	Php 50,000.00
2. PN/PMC Night Fighting System (NFS) Project	Lot 1-4	Php326,509,000.00	PhP 50,000.00
TOTAL		Php 943,634,460.00	

3. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the *Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A* (IRR-A) of *Republic Act No. 9184* (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "*Government Procurement Reform Act*," and is open to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183) and subject to Commonwealth Act 138 (C.A. 138). Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in *Section II* of the Bidding Documents, ITB. The bidder with the *Lowest Calculated Bid* (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine responsiveness of the bid to technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the *Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder* (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.
4. Interested Bidders may obtain further information from the *DND Bids and Awards Committee* (DND BAC) *Secretariat* and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address specified below from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM
5. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested Bidders from the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee in the amount specified above. The method of payment will be in cash or thru cashier's check. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.
6. The DND BAC will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all interested parties on **June 6, 2007 at 9:00 A.M.**, DND Conference Room, 3rd Floor, DND Bldg., Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City.
7. Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered to the address below on or before **June 14, 2007** at **9:00 A.M.** All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid Security in any form and corresponding amount allowed under RA 9184 and its IRR-A. Late bids shall not be accepted.
8. Bid opening shall be on **June 14, 2007** at **9:00 A.M.** and DND Conference Room, 3rd Floor, DND Bldg., Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the address below.
9. Only bids from manufacturers or their authorized representative of the aforementioned system/equipment will be entertained.
10. To facilitate eligibility checking, manufacturers and/or prospective bidders who wish to participate in the public bidding may apply for registration with the DND BAC, through the DND BAC Secretariat, at least fifteen (15) days prior to the scheduled submission and opening of bids for the procurement of the projects they wish to participate in, pursuant to *DND BAC Cir 01-2005* dated 12 May 2005.
11. The DND/AFP reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, and to annul the bidding process and reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

DND BAC Secretariat
DMO Building, Camp Gen Emilio Aguinaldo
Quezon City, Philippines 1110
Tel. No: (632) 911-6001 local 8414
Telefax No: (632) 421-3531
Email: bacsecretariat@dnd.gov.ph
Website: www.dnd.gov.ph

Original Signed
ASEC ROBERTO G NUQUI
Chairman, DND BAC

(PDI – May 21, 2007)

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Labor and Employment
National Wages and Productivity Commission
REGIONAL TRIPARTITE WAGES AND PRODUCTIVITY BOARD
NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Notice is hereby given that a public hearing on the matter of minimum wage adjustment in the National Capital Region is hereby set by the Regional Tripartite Wages and Productivity Board – National Capital Region (RTWPB-NCR) on 14 June 2007, 2:00 p.m. Occupational Safety and Health Center (OSHC), OSHC Complex, North Avenue corner Science Road, Diliman, Quezon City.

All interested parties who may wish to present their position/opposition on the matter are enjoined to attend the public hearing and may file their position papers with the Board on or before the scheduled date of hearing at the RTWPB-NCR Secretariat Room 11-C, 11th Floor, G.E. Antonino Building, cor. T.M. Kalaw & J. Bocobo Streets, Ermita, Manila or send through telefax number 527-51-55 or email address: **wage_ncr@yahoo.com.ph**

(Sgd.) **LOURDES M. TRASMONTE**
Regional Board Chairperson

(PDI – May 21, 2007)

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL DEFENSE
ARMED FORCES OF THE PHILIPPINES
OFFICE OF THE AFP BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE
Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

(PROCUREMENT OF 271 units Motorcycles and 84 sets Digital Camera with Zoom Lens)

1. The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), through the Special Allotment Release Order (SARO) Number D-07-00818 dated January 18, 2007, intends to apply the sum of **TWENTY SIX MILLION FOUR HUNDRED SEVENTY THOUSAND PESOS (Php 26,470,000.00)** being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the corresponding contract for the ***Supply and Delivery of Motorcycles and Digital Camera with Zoom Lens.*** Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening.
2. The Armed Forces of the Philippines, through the GHQ BAC1, now invites from eligible Bidders for the following projects:

Item Nr	Nomenclature/Activity	Approved Budget for the Contract	Price of Bid Documents	Delivery Schedule
1	GHQ BAC1-MOD-PA-06-07 217 Units Motorcycles w/ ILS Package	Php 17,580,000.00	Php 6,000.00	To be delivered w/in 60 days upon opening of Letter of Credit (LC)
2	GHQ BAC1-MOD-PA-07-07 84 Sets Digital Camera with Zoom Lens w/ ILS Package	Php 8,890,000.00	Php 3,000.00	To be delivered w/in 90 days upon opening of Letter of Credit (LC)

3. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws and regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183) and subject to Commonwealth Act 138 (C.A. 138). Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB. The bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine responsiveness of the bid to technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who would be determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.
4. Interested Bidders may obtain further information from AFP Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) Secretariat and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M., Monday to Friday excluding holidays.
5. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested Bidders from the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee. The method of payment will be on cash basis only. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.
6. The AFP BAC will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all interested parties on **9:00 a.m. May 30, 2007 (Wednesday)** at Silid Panday Pira, G/F Bulwagang Mabini, Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City.
7. Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered to the address below on **9:00 a.m. May 30, 2007 (Wednesday)**. All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid Security in any form and corresponding amount allowed under RA 9184 and its IRR-A. Late bids shall not be accepted.
8. Bid opening shall be on **9:00 a.m. June 13, 2007 (Wednesday)** at Silid Panday Pira, G/F Bulwagang Mabini, Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the address below.
9. Only offers or bids from prospective bidders who are the manufacturers distributors or suppliers or their duly authorized representatives shall be entertained. Prospective bidders should have experience in undertaking similar projects within the last five (5) years with a single project amounting to at least 25% and an accumulated projects amounting to at least 50% of the ABC of the proposed project for bidding.
10. To facilitate eligibility checking, prospective bidders who are the manufacturers, distributors or suppliers or their duly authorized representative who wish to participate in the public bidding may apply for registration with the AFP BAC, through the GHQ BAC1 Secretariat, as early as possible but not later than three (3) days prior to the scheduled submission and opening of bids.
11. The AFP reserves the right to reject any and all Bids, declare a failure of bidding or not award the contract without incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

Office of the AFP Bids and Awards Committee
G/F Bulwagang Syquio
Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City
Contact Person: ***Ms Edna Malonzo***
Tel. Nr: 911-6001 Loc 6486/6487
Fax Nr: 911-6001 Loc 6485
Email add: malonzo499@yahoo.com.ph

(Sgd.) **RADM ALFREDO D ABUEG JR AFP**
Chairman, GHQ BAC1

(PDI – May 21, 2007)

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL DEFENSE
ARMED FORCES OF THE PHILIPPINES
OFFICE OF THE AFP BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE
Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

1. The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), through the Special Allotment Release Order (SARO) Number D-07-00818 dated January 18, 2007, intends to apply the sum of **THIRTEEN MILLION ONE HUNDRED EIGHTY THOUSAND PESOS (Php 13,180,000.00)** being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the corresponding contract for the ***Supply and Delivery of Radio Broadcast System Equipment.*** Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening.
2. The Armed Forces of the Philippines, through the GHQ BAC1, now invites from eligible Bidders for the item stated below:

Item Nr	Nomenclature/Activity	Approved Budget for the Contract	Price of Bid Documents	Delivery Schedule
1	GHQ BAC1-MOD-PA-08-07 32 Sets Radio Broadcast System w/ ILS Package	Php 13,180,000.00	Php 6,000.00	To be delivered w/in 120 calendar days upon opening of the Letter of Credit (LC) or issuance of the Notice to Proceed whichever comes later.

3. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws and regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183) and subject to Commonwealth Act 138 (C.A. 138). Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB. The bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine responsiveness of the bid to technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who would be determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.
4. Interested Bidders may obtain further information from AFP Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) Secretariat and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M., Monday to Friday excluding holidays.
5. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested Bidders from the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee. The method of payment will be on cash basis only. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.
6. The AFP BAC will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all interested parties on **9:00 a.m. June 1, 2007 (Friday)** at Silid Panday Pira, G/F Bulwagang Mabini, Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City.
7. Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered to the address below on **9:00 a.m. June 14, 2007 (Thursday)**. All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid Security in any form and corresponding amount allowed under RA 9184 and its IRR-A. Late bids shall not be accepted.
8. Bid opening shall be on **9:00 a.m. June 14, 2007 (Thursday)** at Silid Panday Pira, G/F Bulwagang Mabini, Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the address below.
9. Only offers or bids from suppliers who are themselves the manufacturers or their duly authorized representatives shall be entertained. Prospective bidders should have experience in undertaking similar projects within the last five (5) years with a single project amounting to at least 25% and an accumulated projects amounting to at least 50% of the ABC of the proposed project for bidding.
10. To facilitate eligibility checking, prospective bidders who are themselves the manufacturers or their duly authorized representative who wish to participate in the public bidding may apply for registration with the AFP BAC, through the GHQ BAC1 Secretariat, as early as possible but not later than three (3) days prior to the scheduled submission and opening of bids.
11. The AFP reserves the right to reject any and all Bids, declare a failure of bidding or not award the contract without incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

Office of the AFP Bids and Awards Committee
G/F Bulwagang Syquio
Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City
Contact Person: ***Ms Edna Malonzo***
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Email add: malonzo499@yahoo.com.ph

(Sgd.) **RADM ALFREDO D ABUEG JR AFP**
Chairman, AFP BAC

(PDI – May 21, 2007)

SPORTS WATCH

SJC Int'l Derby stakes P5M

A GUARANTEED PRIZE of P5 million is up for grabs in the second leg of the bi-annual SJC International 8-Cock Derby slated June 11, 13 and 15 at the San Juan Coliseum. A banner field of 100 participants featuring foreign bidders will vie for honors in the derby hosted by SJC owner Rodolfo Pineda and sponsored by Sagupaan Complexor 3000. Last January, Californian Joe Sanford teamed up with Patrick Antonio and Allan Siaco (AS PA Winning Line) to share the championship with Pampanga town mayor Buddy Dunca (Banjo) in the 122-entry first leg. Meanwhile, the SJC Cockers Club 4-cock derby unwraps on Wednesday with 60 fights on tap.

Super Pacman tiffs up at PCC

SELECTED MEMBERS of big cockers group clash starting at 5 p.m. today in the Super Pacman 4-Cock Derby at the Pasay City Cockpit. The 70-fight program is supported by Sagupaan Complexor 3000. Derby regulars from the Pasay Cockpit Cockers Association (PCCA), Pinoy Cockers Association of the Philippines (PCAP), National Cockers Association (NCA) and Gentlemen Cockers Association of the Philippines (GCAP) have been invited to compete, said host Nelson Pacquiao. Meanwhile, the Super Clyde and Yce 4-Cock Derby fires off at the venue on Friday with Charlie Hao as host. Also, the NCA 5-Cock Derby has been reset to May 29.

Summer Heat derby finals on

A GUARANTEED PRIZE of P1.3 million awaits the winners in the Summer Heat 4-Cock Derby finals today at the Roligon Mega Cockpit with Lakpue Drug Inc. and Thunderbird Enertone as sponsors. The first of more than 120 fights starts at 3 p.m. A total of 204 entries are vying in the derby hosted by Danny Ty and Aba Badiola. Forty participants lead the race with two wins each, among them Ronnie Puno of Rizal with three entries, Roger Parungao, Reden Arcibal, Tony Oppen, James Yaya, Rico Torres, Jovy Tuadles, Danny Morales, George Bueno, Muling Dorado, Boogie dela Rosa, Ronnie Lacsina and 2006 Summer Heat champion Raul Ebeo.

Federer tries anew against Nadal

HAMBURG—RAFAEL NADAL HAD TO come from a set down on Saturday to win an almighty scrap with Lleyton Hewitt, 2-6 6-3 7-5, and book a Hamburg Masters final date with Roger Federer.

Nadal so often makes winning on clay look effortless but against the rejuvenated Hewitt, he needed guts and guile to extend his winning streak on clay to 81 matches, a run that dates back to April 2005.

His reward is a clash with the world number one Federer, who showed he is getting his game back together just in time for the French Open by securing a 4-6 6-4 6-2 win over Carlos Moya that was ultimately pretty convincing.

It is a repeat of the Monte Carlo final last month, won 6-4 6-4 by Nadal, but after the huge physical effort Nadal needed on Saturday, Federer may feel he has a much better chance this time.

"If I beat Nadal in the final it would be a real boost for me in terms of motivation, energy and confidence," said Federer, who has lost four tournaments, his worst run since he became world number one in February 2004.

"But if not it's not the end of the world. I've had a good week and I've come through my matches convincingly."

Federer in fact looked anything but comfortable in the first set against Moya, as the 30-year-old Spaniard, a French Open winner back in 1998, took advantage of the 20 unforced errors made by his opponent.

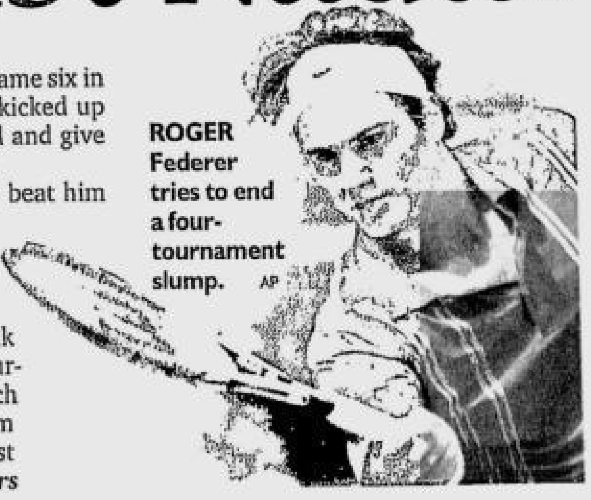
Federer started to find his range in the second set but he still looked ill at ease at times, missing three set points as he served at 5-3 and allowed Moya to break back.

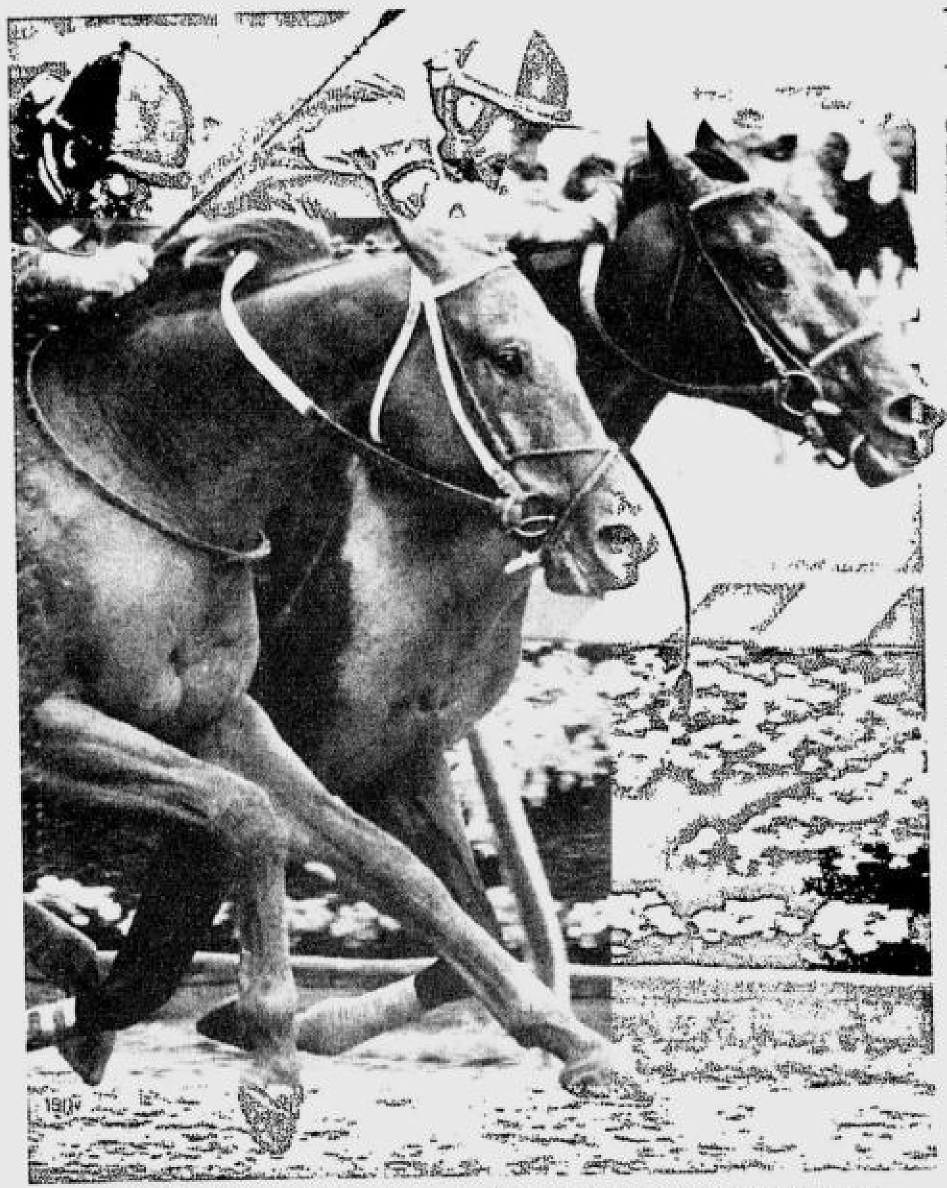
The Swiss steadied himself and broke again when he forced Moya wide with a vicious forehand on the crucial point.

Moya stayed in touch until game six in the decider, when a forehand kicked up wildly to surprise the Spaniard and give Federer the first of two breaks.

"This was a good chance to beat him but Roger always plays his best on the big points," Moya said. "He played great tennis on the break points."

Nadal's long winning streak on clay has brought him 13 tournaments, including two French Opens, but he looked far from his commanding best against Hewitt. *Reuters*


ROGER Federer tries to end a four-tournament slump. AP


CURLIN, (left), ridden by Robby Albarado, inches up on Street Sense ridden by Calvin Borel to win in the final stretch of the 132nd Preakness Stakes. AP

Delasin drops to 29th; Lee solo leader

CLIFTON, NEW JERSEY—SARAH LEE SHOT A NEAR FLAWLESS 7-under-par 65 on Saturday to open a two-shot lead over No. 1-ranked Lorena Ochoa after three rounds of the $1.4-million (euro1.04 million) Sybase Classic, a tournament that has been seemingly been reduced to two-player field.

Fil-American Dorothy Delasin faltered with a three-over 75 to drop to a share of 29th place after occupying 19th spot at the end of two rounds.

Lee, who has either led or shared the lead for the first two rounds, was at 16-under 200, the low 54-hole total on the US tour this year. Ochoa is 14 under at the Upper Montclair Country Club.

The next closest golfers were seven strokes back, the trio of Kate Godlen, South Korea's Jo Young and Sherri Steinhauer at 7-under. *AP*

Curlin overtakes Street Sense, tops Preakness Stakes

BALTIMORE—CURLIN MOVED AHEAD OF KENtucky Derby winner Street Sense in the final stride and won the Preakness Stakes by a nose Saturday, ending a chance of a US thoroughbred Triple Crown this season.

Street Sense seemed to have the race won, taking the lead in the stretch. But the colt was unable to hold off Curlin's late charge engineered by jockey Robby Albarado.

Three races earlier, Albarado was thrown from his mount but walked away unhurt.

Curlin entered the Preakness with just four career starts, including a third-place finish in the Kentucky Derby just two weeks ago. As Hard Spun swung into the lead moving three wide, Street Sense went to the outside in the stretch and took the lead. But Curlin gained along the far outside, and caught him on the final stride before the wire.

The colt claimed $650,000 by winning the 1.9-kilometer Preakness with a time of 1:53.46. *AP*

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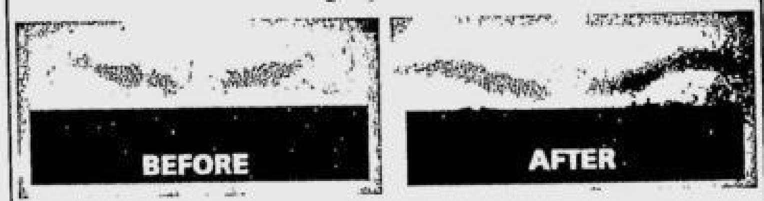

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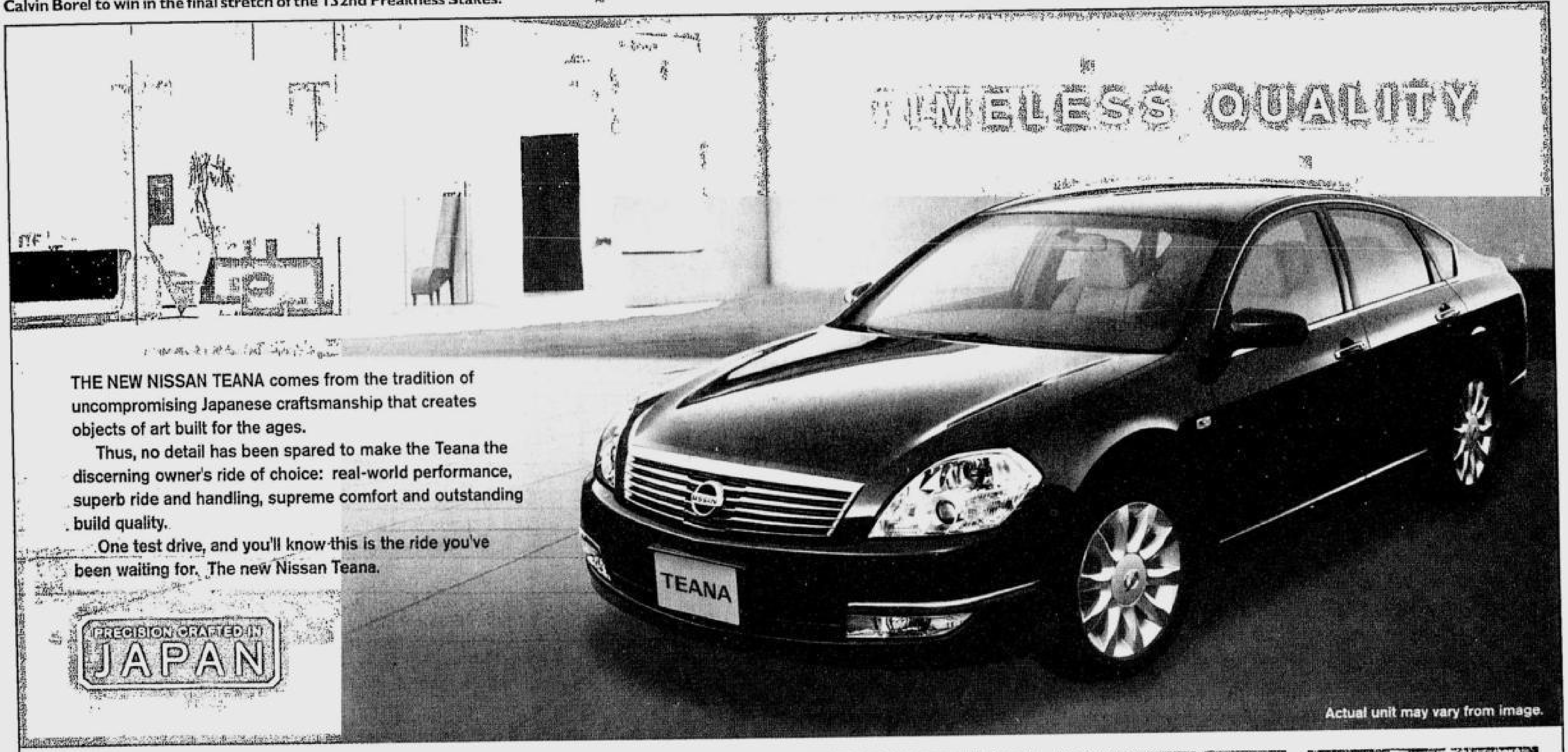

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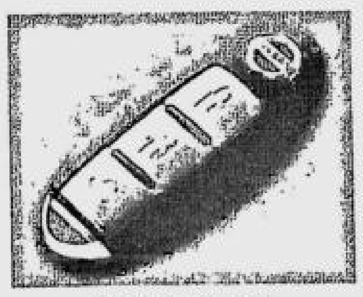
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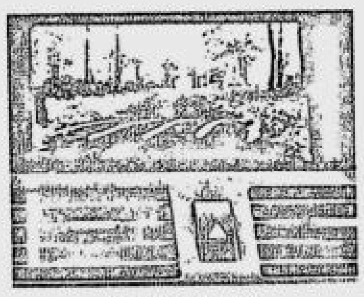
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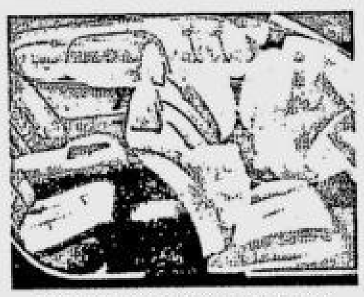
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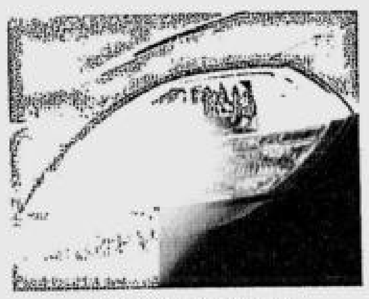
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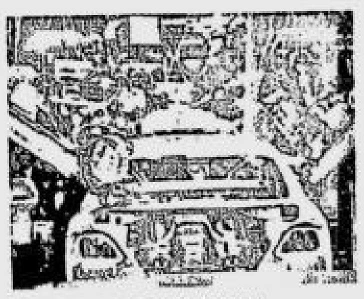
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SPORTS

Rondon spikers dump UPIS in 2

E. RONDON HIGH SCHOOL CONTINUED ITS winning ways in the Shakey's Girls Volleyball Invitational League, dumping UP Integrated School, 25-12, 25-8, for its third win in as many games yesterday at the Ateneo gym.

"Even if we are leading in Bracket D, we still have to meet two strong teams," said E. Rondon coach Lito Baccud, referring to St. Francis of Assisi College and San Beda Alabang who stand in the way of their sweep drive.

In the opening match, St. Jude thwarted Assumption Antipolo in Bracket B, 25-9, 25-12.

Philippine Institute of Quezon City downed Holy Family, 25-17, 25-17, in the third game.

Shelly C. Dimaculangan

MALAYSIAN AM OPEN

Bayron winds up 3rd

JAY BAYRON MATCHED PAR 70 IN ANother punishing day at the Nexus Golf Resort Karambunai and settled for solo third in the 105th Malaysian Amateur Open ruled by Goh Kun Yan of Singapore.

Bayron, who started the round in joint fifth, six shots behind three-day leader Anirban Lahiri of India, failed to unleash a final round charge, missing a couple of makeable birdie putts at the backside.

Counting his earlier rounds of 75, 75 and 72, the 27-year-old Filipino shotmaker wound up with a 291, 11-over par at the par-70 layout in Kota Kinabalu.

Goh surged from behind with a near-flawless three-under 67 and snatched the crown from Lahiri with a six-over 286 aggregate.

He won by two shots over the Indian bet, who cracked under pressure and finished with a 73 for a 288.

Michael Bibat wound up sixth with 294 after closing with a two-over 72.

The other ICTSI-backed Filipino finishers were Sabah Amateur Open winner Ferdie Aunzo (72-297), Miko Alejandro (75-297), Dante Becierra (74-300), Anthony Fernando (75-301), Gene Bondoc (75-304), Marcel Puyat (80-309) and Gino Bunyi (83-314).

The RP team heads for Shah Alam, Selangor, this week for the HLA Saujana Amateur Open which starts Wednesday at the Saujana Golf and Country Club.

Meanwhile, the ladies squad, headed by Dottie Ardina and Cyna Rodriguez, heads for the Malaysian Women's Amateur Open.

BAYRON: Closes out with a 70

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Big finish shoves Royal Northwoods to Ford golf finals

ROYAL NORTHWOODS I DOMINATED the Luzon North regional final recently and remained on course for a second straight title in the Ford National Team Shootout.

The defending champion towed two others squads, including Royal Northwoods II, into the grand finals of the annual event among the country's top golf clubs.

The Royal Northwoods golfers, composed of Danny Clarin, Omar Dungca, Cris Wan and new member Manny Mendoza, put on an amazing windup to rule the Luzon satellite, closing out with an eye-popping rare double eagle-eagle-birdie windup for a stirring 6-under card in the last three holes for a 13-under total at the Baguio Country Club layout.

With a seven-under card heading to the last three holes, Royal Northwoods I went to Clarin, who hit it straight off the tee of the par-5 No. 16. Dungca then uncorked a solid 5-iron shot from 210 yards out that went in for the double-eagle.

Dungca hit another perfect drive on the par-5 17th and then Clarin made his approach shot from 180 yards to within four feet which Mendoza knocked in for eagle.

Sustaining the momentum, Clarin hit another solid tee-shot which Wan completed for a birdie for that 13-under card.

It was a remarkable windup for the San Rafael, Bulacan-based golfers, who outduelled Tagaytay Highlands and Eagle Ridge in a two-day shootout last year to win the championship at The Orchard and Sta. Elena courses.

Runner-up Baguio Country Club finished at 9-under while Royal Northwoods II, headed by Rodel Mangulabnan, Richard Joson, Gerardo Pancho and Lorraine Joson, closed out with an 8-under total.

The Royal Northwoods teams and Baguio Country Club thus advanced to the grand finals slated May 31 and June 1 at the Tagaytay Midlands and Highlands courses.

At stake is an all-expenses-paid golf vacation to a five-star course in China.

Allanic captures WBO crown in S. Korea

By Salven Lagumbay
Contributor

SEOUL—FILIPINO ROBERT ALlanic captured the World Boxing Organization (WBO) Asia Pacific bantamweight interim title with an impressive seventh-round technical knockout victory Saturday over Korean Chang Jae-kwon at the Shin Heung University at Uijeongbu City here.

Korean referee Wan Soo-yuh stopped the contest at the 40-second mark of the seventh round as Allanic pounced on Chang endlessly with big combinations and uppercuts to the face.

Allanic bucked a fourth-round cut caused by an accidental head-butt, which opened a wound above his left eyebrow. He dominated all throughout the fight using crisp jabs and uppercuts for which Chang had no answer.

By the sixth round, Allanic of Cebu's ALA Stable had left the Korean's face a mask of crimson.

The win improved Allanic's record to 16 wins, 3 losses with 8 KOs, while Chang went down to 14-3 with 10 KOs.

With the win, Allanic also redeemed himself from a loss to Abner Mares in Philadelphia.

Filipino Fernando Otic was not as lucky as he lost a majority decision to Korean Hee Jae-jo.

The scores were 95-95, 93-97 and 94-96 with the Korean winning on the two Korean judges' scorecards.

Ramos top RP performer in Asia-Pacific jungolf tilt

MULTITITLED JIRO ALLENBY Ramos emerged as the best Filipino performer in the 28th Asia-Pacific Junior Golf Championship at the Eden course of the exclusive Hong Kong Golf Club by placing second in boys Class D recently.

Ramos fired a last-day 68 for a 222 but still lost by three strokes to local bet Sibo Yan who carded a 69. Another RP bet, Miggy Yee, settled for third place after a 71 for 226.

Beverly Mendoza placed fourth runner-up in girls Class A and led the RP team to a fourth place finish in team play.

Meanwhile, Zannie Boy Guiallon came from behind to capture the boys Class A title in the recent Orchard Golf and Country Club leg of the Jungolf Summer Circuit.

Guiallon overturned a two-shot deficit with a one-over-par 73 effort at the Player course of Orchard in Dasmariñas, Cavite to streak to a five-stroke win over erstwhile leader Joey Huerva.

Guiallon totalled 227 for 54 holes against the 232 of Huerva who soared to an 80 on the last day. Tonton Saban was third 78-233.

Other division winners were Paulina Sotto in girls Class A, Patrick Uy and Louise Manalo in Class B, Bino dela Paz and Andie Unson in Class C and Jeon Dae Wok and Princess Superal in Class D.

The results:

Class A: Boys—227 Z. Guiallon, 232 J. Huerva, 233 T. Saban; **Girls**—222 P. Sotto

Class B: Boys—239 P. Uy, 240 N. Ekegren, 243 J. Song; **Girls**—256 L. Manalo, 277 C. Redillas, 279 J. Young

Class C: Boys—233 B. dela Paz, 244 P. Koo, 250 A. Mata; **Girls**—239 A. Unson, 248 S. Hwang, 257 S. Ababa

Class D: Boys—285 J. Wok, 303 J. Cruz, 308 J Patnongon; **Girls**—251 P. Superal, 269 R. Kim, 298 B. Pagdanganan

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BSP eases rules for agri, micro lending

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Loan documentation simplified

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE BANGKO SENTRAL NG PILIPINAS HAS EASED some credit rules to boost the flow of funds to agriculture and microfinance, or lending to the entrepreneurial poor.

In a briefing Friday, BSP Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said two new measures were recently adopted by the banking regulator to encourage lending to agriculture and microfinance-oriented institutions.

He said loans for agriculture that were previously covered by regular loan requirements would now adopt the less tedious requirements allowed under the rules for microfinance lending.

"What we've done is covered these agri-loans by the rules for microfinance, which means they can follow simplified documentation," Tetangco said.

He said the BSP has also allowed bank lending to non-bank microfinance institutions as eligible for the mandatory lending to small enterprises.

The Magna Carta for Small and Medium Enterprises requires banks to earmark 6 percent of their total loan portfolio to small enterprises and another 2 percent to medium enterprises or those capitalized above P15 million up to P60 million.

"Micro is closer to small (enterprise lending) so this can be covered by the Magna Carta for SMEs," Tetangco said.

The inclusion gives lenders more incentive to increase their exposure to microfinance.

The BSP allows several alternative modes of compliance to the SME mandatory lending, such as the use of unavailed committed credit lines, holdings of Small Business Guarantee and Finance Corp. instruments, equity investments in or loans by BAP Credit Guarantee Corp., equity investments in the small business guarantee fund of Land Bank of the Philippines and other government financial institutions, and equity investments in venture capital corporations.

Based on a BSP study, microfinance has a potential for greater outreach in the Philippines as existing institutions have tapped only a third of the

BSP/ B9

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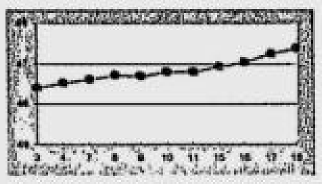

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Some profit taking toward the end of the week would not be a surprise as the market has touched new historical highs, said AB

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Alarm raised over coconut pest infestation

Hispine beetle problem seen to wipe out $760-M industry in three years

By Amy R. Remo

ABOUT 70,000 TREES OR 700 HECTARES of coconut plantation have already been infested with the coconut hispine beetle, which threatens to wipe out the country's $760-million industry in three years' time.

At the sidelines of the Manila Overseas Press Club's Farmers Night held Friday, CIIF Oil Mills Group president and CEO Danilo M. Coronacion said the infestation had spread in different areas throughout the country from southern Luzon to Mindanao.

"These pests are native to Papua New Guinea and Indonesia and were brought to the Philippines through ornamental plants imported from Thailand and Vietnam," Coronacion said.

Also known as Brontispa longissima Gestro, the beetle feeds on young leaves, which would then appear burned or scorched. The beetle also damages seedlings and mature coconut palms, killing young spears and eventually the whole palm.

Once they latch onto a coconut or palm tree, the pests make their presence felt—and seen—immediately.

These beetles arrived on local shores in 2005 through imported ornamental plants. They were first spotted preying on palm trees along the Baywalk strip of Roxas Boulevard in Manila.

Coronacion said that there were currently no restrictions or sanitary measures imposed on the importation of ornamental plants.

The problem, according to Coronacion, was that these beetles multiply very fast and could spread through anything it touches—plants, flowers, fruits or even clothes.

However, he noted that the infestation could be treated.

"Curing these 70,000 trees, for instance, is cheap at P350,000. The biggest difficulty lies in locating these beetles and the extent of its spread," Coronacion said.

He urged people to watch out for tell-tale signs of a beetle infestation such as scorched leaves and buds, as well as damaged crowns.

According to the Food and Agriculture Organization, the brontispa beetle first came into prominence after attacking coconut and palm trees in Indochina, specifically Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia and Thailand.

Infestations were also discovered later on the Chinese mainland, notably Hainan and Guangdong provinces, and soon on the island of Taiwan.

Later, the beetle was found in Indonesia, Malaysia (a major palm oil producer), Myanmar, Maldives and Sri Lanka.

In all these countries, coconut and palm tree output was severely affected by the outbreak.

Napocor eyes dedicated power plant for Bicol

By Abigail L. Ho

IN LIGHT OF TYphoons that often hit Bicol, leaving it disconnected from the rest of the Luzon grid due to damaged transmission towers and substations, National Power Corp. is considering doing so-called "islanding operations" in the region.

This means cutting off the Bicol region from the rest of the

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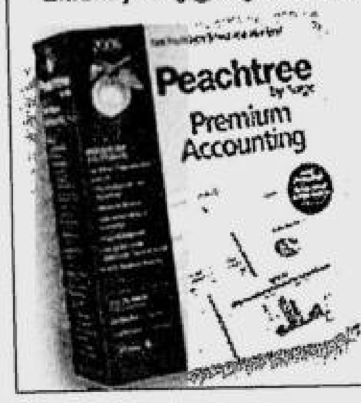

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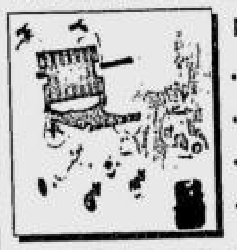

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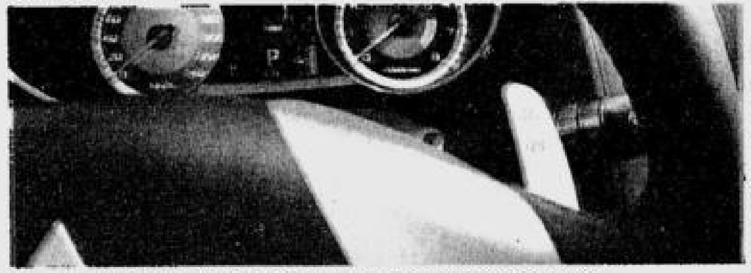

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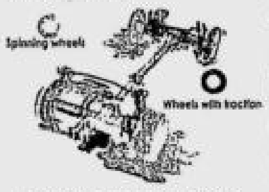

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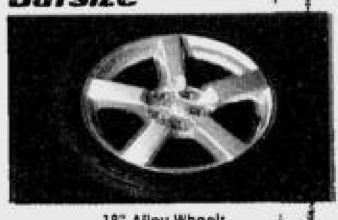

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CAMP JOHN HAY	330,000	280,000
CANLUBANG	470,000	430,000
CANYON WOODS	100,000	70,000
CAPITOL HILLS	60,000	Please Call
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CELEBRITY SPORTS CLUB	110,000	100,000
CLUB FILIPINO	100,000	80,000
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EAGLERIDGE "C"	350,000	-
FOREST HILLS "A"	85,000	60,000
LUISITA GOLF "A"	350,000	270,000
MAKATI SPORTS CLUB "A"	200,000	180,000
MAKATI SPORTS CLUB "B"	230,000	180,000
MANILA GOLF (CORP)	-	17,000,000
MANILA GOLF (IND)	-	16,000,000
MANILA POLO	Please Call	3,300,000
MANILA SOUTHWOODS "A"	300,000	-
MANILA SOUTHWOODS "B"	700,000	630,000
MANILA YACHT CLUB	200,000	150,000
MIMOSA (IND)	200,000	-
MT. MALARAYAT GOLD "A"	170,000	-
ORCHARD GOLF CLUB "A"	170,000	150,000
ORCHARD GOLF CLUB "B"	320,000	-
ORCHARD GOLF CLUB "C"	350,000	-
QUEZON CITY SPORTS CLUB	160,000	130,000
ROCKWELL CLUB	300,000	220,000
SPA & LODGE	Please Call	500,000
STA. ELENA "A"	-	1,500,000
STA. ELENA "B"	2,200,000	1,600,000
TAGAYTAY COUNTRY CLUB	300,000	-
TAGAYTAY HIGHLANDS	700,000	650,000
TAGAYTAY MIDLANDS	670,000	620,000
THE PALMS COUNTRY CLUB "A"	380,000	330,000
VALLE VERDE (IND)	100,000	-
VALLEY GOLF	Please Call	200,000
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CC CLUB @ TAGAYTAY	300K	CLUB FILIPINO	80K
EAGLERIDGE A	145K	CC CLUB @ TAGAYTAY	280K
EAGLERIDGE B	250K	LUISITA B	250K
EASTRIDGE	225K	MAKATI SPORTS A	180K
MAKATI SPORTS	200K	MANILA GOLF CORP.	18.0M
MANILA POLO CLUB	PLS. CALL	MANILA GOLF IND	17.5M
MANILA SOUTHWOODS A	300K	MANILA POLO CLUB	3.6M
MANILA SOUTHWOODS B	650K	MIMOSA IND.	180K
MANILA YACHT CLUB IND.	200K	MONTEMAR	30K
MIMOSA C-3	600K	ORCHARD C	330K
MIMOSA IND.	200K	ROCKWELL CLUB	230K
ORCHARD B	280K	STA. ELENA A	1.5M
ORCHARD C	380K	STA. ELENA B	PLS. CALL
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STA. ELENA B	2.150M	THE PALMS	300K
SUBIC BAY GOLF CLUB	100K	VALLE VERDE-IND.	80K
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Baguio Country Club	600,000	550,000
Camp John Hay	330,000	280,000
Canlubang Golf	470,000	430,000
Canyon Woods	100,000	-
Capitol Hills	40,000	-
Cebu Country Club	Pls. Call	Pls. Call
Celebrity Sports	Pls. Call	-
City Sports Cebu	-	360,000
Club Filipino	90,000	Pls. Call
Eagleridge A/B*/C**	170,000/Pls. Call*/Pls. Call**	140,000/200,000*
Eastridge A/B*	150,000*	80,000/130,000*
Evercrest	65,000	-
Fairways & Bluewater	Pls. Call	Pls. Call
Forest Hills A/B*/C**	90,000/170,000*	120,000*
Luisita Golf B	Pls. Call	Pls. Call
Manila Golf Corporate	Pls. Call	-
Manila Golf Individual	Pls. Call	16,000,000
Manila Polo	Pls. Call	3,050,000
Manila Southwoods A/B*	300,000/Pls. Call*	250,000
Makati Sports Club A/B*	200,000/230,000*	Pls. Call
Manila Yacht Club Ind.	280,000	-
Metropolitan Club A/B*	160,000	-
Mimosa C1/C2*/C3**	220,000	100,000
Mt. Malarayat A	180,000	-
Orchard A/B*/C**	170,000/Pls. Call*/350,000**	-
Punta Fuego	Pls. Call	Pls. Call
Quezon City Sports Club	170,000	Pls. Call
Riviera Golf A/B*/C**	80,000/170,000*/250,000**	Pls. Call*
Rockwell Leisure Club	Pls. Call	230,000
Royale Tagaytay CC	65,000	-
Sherwood A/B*/C**	70,000/170,000*	100,000*
Splendido Taal	200,000	Pls. Call
Sta. Elena Golf A/B*	Pls. Call	1,500,000
Subic Golf	150,000	-
Summit Point A	280,000	-
The Palms Country Club	380,000	Pls. Call
Country Club at Tagaytay Highlands	300,000	-
Tagaytay Highlands	700,000	650,000
Tagaytay Midlands	Pls. Call	Pls. Call
The Country Club	2,000,000	-
Tower Club A/B*	150,000/180,000*	-
Valley Golf	230,000	200,000
Valle Verde Ind.	100,000	-
Wack Wack Golf	-	8,200,000

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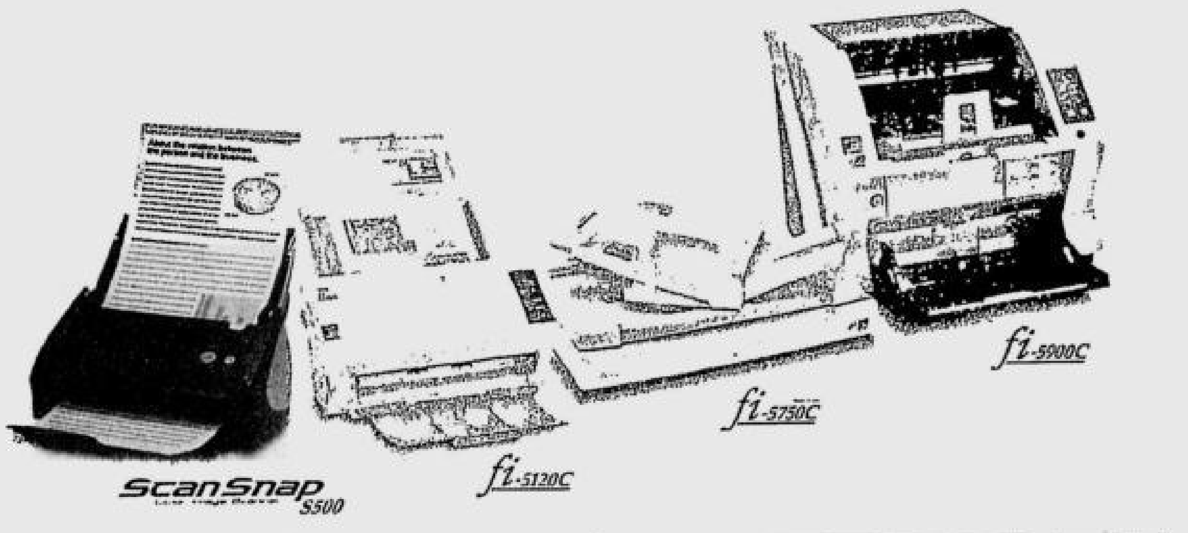

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Bank loans to farm sector remain marginal

By Amy R. Remo

THE AGRICULTURE SECTOR CONtinues to receive a paltry amount of financing from the banking sector.

The Bureau of Agricultural Statistics has noted that only 3 percent of the total loans released by banks in 2006 went to agriculture.

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas confirmed this figure, saying its records showed that the percentage of bank loans that went to the farm sector was not higher than 4 percent in 2006.

"We take pride on how our microcredit and microfinance programs are private-sector led. We stand on testimonies of private sector finance operators who had sung praises to the excellent repayment record of farm workers. Yet the much-needed bridge financing (from the banking sector) still has eluded farmers, especially those from the countryside," lamented Agriculture Secretary Arthur C. Yap during the Manila Overseas Press Club's Farmers Night.

Yap reiterated the need to bring microfinance closer to millions of farmers and fisherfolk and reform the rules and regulations applicable to crop insurance in the Philippines.

DA pushes microfinance programs

The absence of bridge financing, Yap added, kept agricultural produce in the hands of local financiers and traders.

This lack was also the reason why agricultural commodities are priced four or five times higher than their farmgate prices, he said.

Expanding access of farmers to rural credit is a critical component in the government's five-point program aimed at raising farm productivity and farmers' income, as well as reducing prices of agricultural commodities when these reach the consumers.

"The issue here is not merely confined to the rate of interest being charged, usually pegged at 36 percent or more. Rather, it is the non-accessibility of credit itself," Yap said.

Rural credit has been extended to thousands of farmers and fisherfolk through various programs. In fact, the Agriculture and Credit Policy Council and Quedancor are still collecting billions of pesos in farm loans from the previous administrations.

The state-owned Land Bank of the Philippines earlier reported that it released P3.6 billion worth of loans in the first quarter, up 14 percent from P3.2 billion in the same period last year, benefiting more than 93,000 small farmers and fisherfolk nationwide.

However, the number of those who do not have access to rural credit remained bigger, in fact running into millions, than those who have availed themselves of it.

The Department of Agriculture is already reforming rules and regulations on crop insurance to help ease the rural credit squeeze.

It is also streamlining attached agencies in an effort to free up assets and funds for critical programs in agricultural modernization, such as in the case of Food Terminal Inc. in Taguig City and Northern Foods Corp.

"The rationalization and sale of underutilized assets and the corporate and financial restructuring of the National Food Authority and other agencies are the first few steps leading in that direction," Yap said.

Agriculture and job creation

No Free Lunch

Cielito F. Habito

I'VE BEEN WRITING LATELY THAT TOURISM is the key to unleashing millions of new jobs relatively quickly in order to gainfully employ our millions of relatively young and under-educated jobless. Call centers and business process outsourcing (BPO) firms are up-and-rising sources of new jobs, but given the characteristics of the bulk of our unemployed, it is clear that we need to look further beyond for solutions to our persistently high unemployment rate.

Massive public investments to upgrade education need to be made to address the existing mismatch between the promising employment opportunities in these services sectors on one hand, and the skills and capabilities of our jobless workers on the other. But even if this were done now, it will still take a generation to see its tangible results.

Drag on growth

Meanwhile, we need to figure out how to give stable jobs to some 3-4 million jobless Filipinos, now. We know from the statistics that they are mostly under 35 years old, have not studied beyond high school, and are located in the rural areas.

Statistics also tell us that agriculture and agriculture-related industries account for up to two-thirds of the jobs in our economy at present. If our current economic growth is not translating into a commensurate growth in jobs, it is because too little of our economic growth is coming from job-rich agriculture. Last year, for example, agriculture only contributed less than a tenth of the total growth in the economy. Our GDP growth is coming mostly from sectors that, unlike agriculture, do not create too may jobs as they grow.

An examination of our recent GDP growth data shows that agriculture has consistently grown more slowly than the rest of the economy. In fact, agriculture grew more slowly than the overall economy did in all but four of the last 16 quarters. One might say that the farm sector has been a drag on our overall economy's growth.

Job-rich

All this tells me that apart from tourism, the other key to creating the jobs that will gainfully employ a substantial portion of our unemployed is to boost the growth of the job-rich agricultural sector.

But recent experience warns us that growth in the sector is not enough. It is not any kind of growth in agriculture that we are after. How it grows matters a great deal as well. Last year, for example, the farm sector zoomed in the second quarter with a 7-percent growth in production over the same quarter of the previous year. But employment data in that same quarter showed a net loss of 149,000 farm jobs over the same duration!

A closer look at the data reveals that the impressive growth in farm output then was dominated by palay (rice) production, which may have been attributable to the hybrid rice seeds being pushed by the Department of Agriculture. But it was clearly a jobless growth that we got, one whose benefits were narrower than would have been had the growth been accompanied by a commensurate growth in farm jobs.

How, then, should agriculture grow to attain the widest benefit to Filipinos? How do we ensure that agricultural growth is broad-based?

Monopsonies

The farm sector in the Philippines has traditionally been characterized by marked disparities—between poor small farmers and rich, large hacenderos or landlords; and between poor small farmers and rich agricultural traders and processors (e.g. rice and coconut millers). The large number of small farmers always ended up with the short end of the stick. They received very low prices at the farm gate, representing a tiny fraction of what final consumers actually paid for their product.

There were at least two reasons for this. One, the farmer is already indebted to the trader or processor to whom the debt requires him to sell the entire harvest. Or two, there is only one ultimate buyer of his product in the area—a giant coconut oil mill, large sugar central, or big rice miller in town. Either way, the result is a monopsony—there is only one buyer. The result is easy enough to predict: just as a monopolist exploits buyers with a higher price, the monopsonist exploits farmer-suppliers with a lower price. With his resulting low income, the small farmer is ill-equipped to spend for productivity-enhancing technologies or inputs, or to employ more workers.

Power of choice

The way out, then, is to give farmers a choice. We need to move away from feudalistic rural economies dominated by monopsonistic large agricultural processors. We should instead foster the proliferation of more and smaller agri-processing enterprises—the kind we are already seeing in Leyte for abaca and coconut, for example. Farmers also need an efficient farm credit system that will emancipate them from their debts to traders and millers, and thereby give them the option to seek better prices for their produce. If we can do these, I am certain we could make agriculture a much better job-creator and an effective route out of rural poverty.

Comments are welcome at chabito@ateneo.edu

Rally seen to continue

From page B1

Capital Securities in a weekly note to clients.

"We remain confident that the market will remain in a long-term bullish trend, but we may see some see-saw movement in the coming sessions. A driving force to the bullish uptrend is the abundant liquidity in the marketplace. Institutional and individual investors have been increasing their equity investments amid strong corporate profit performances and the prevailing low interest rate environment," said Jose Vistan of AB Capital Securities.

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas reported last week that foreign portfolio investments in April registered a net inflow of $243.1 million, up 40 percent from $173.21 million in March.

"At the moment, the concerns about domestic interest rates bottoming out seem to be taken in stride. Nonetheless, we believe that the market will eventually have to correct as investors cash in profits, but the long-term trend for the market will remain positive," Vistan said.

The Philippine Stock Exchange index (PSEi) hit an all-time high of 3,449.18 last week, and gained 84.57 points or 2.51 percent week on week.

"With the peaceful exercise of the May 14 elections, the market had one major concern finally out of the way. Investors earlier stayed on the sidelines on worries of violence, cheating and even of an opposition-dominated Congress. Early tallies have shown the administration will continue to maintain control of the Lower House while the opposition is poised to have a hold on the Senate," Vistan noted.

" Taking control of the Lower House will help keep a sense of stability as it eliminates any impeachment initiative against President Arroyo," he added.

With the market's run-up last week, Joseph Roxas, president at Eagle Equities Inc., said the index was likely to hit 3,600 this week. "And next year, my target is 4,000," an optimistic Roxas said. *Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson*

Standards for retirement facilities, services set

Industry seen to raise $4B in investments yearly

By Ronnel W. Domingo

A GOVERNMENT AGENCY AND ITS partners in the private sector said they had set accreditation standards for retirement facilities and services as they aim at bringing in some $4 billion in yearly investments into the retirement industry.

The Philippine Retirement Authority and Philippine Retirement Inc. said the standards were developed after several months of consultations with industry leaders including real estate developers, physicians, nurses, insurance providers and lifestyle service experts.

PRI president Ernesto M. Ordoñez said the rules reflected the underlying philosophy of a holistic approach to retirement.

The standards are grouped into three clusters: Housing, which includes safety and security and financing; healthcare, covering insurance and emergency transportation; and lifestyle, covering human resources and management.

"The global standards were established by utilizing studies and guidelines from the United States, Canada and Australia," Ordoñez explained, adding that interviews with key Japanese, Korean and Chinese experts were conducted to better cater to the Asian market.

He said the standards were intended to adequately address the needs of local and foreign retirees as well as protect them from unscrupulous business practices.

"It is also expected to serve as a global marketing strategy to better compete with other Southeast Asian nations also aggressively promoting their own retirement programs," he added.

Further, Ordoñez said the country's accreditation system was unique in the world because three bodies would be put in charge of its implementation—the PRA, PRI and the appropriate foreign chamber of commerce.

In February, PRA chair Edgardo B. Aglipay reported that 1,271 foreign citizens enrolled in the government's special residency program in 2006, bringing in a total of at least $82.5 million in investment funds.

Aglipay said the number of retirees that came in last year was higher than the agency's target of 1,000 and was 117 percent higher than the number attained in 2005.

PRA issues the special resident retiree's visas (SRRVs) to foreigners, including former Filipino citizens who are at least 35 years old, who are aggorded perks that include the option for permanent residency, multiple entry and indefinite stay in the Philippines.

PRA and PRI officials had said the industry aimed at luring about 837,000 retirees by 2015 to bring in a total of some $40 billion.

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PELAC Global Bond Fund	1.1988	1.1981
PELAC Peso Fixed Income Fund	1.0173	1.0018
PELAC Peso Equity Fund	1.2799	1.2550

These investment funds are specific to variable life insurance contracts and are not considered mutual funds. Life insurance products are regulated by the Insurance Commission.
Fund prices are net of transaction costs

3 groups eye NFA's ₱35-B fundraising

By Doris C. Dumlao

AT LEAST THREE CONSORTIA will bid for the mandate to raise P35 billion for the state-owned National Food Authority via a syndicated peso loan facility.

The amount will be used to refinance short-term loans and cover operating expenses this year.

The NFA, which handles the government's rice price stabilization program, has announced its funding requirement to banks and investment houses. It has given interested parties until today (May 21) to submit their financing proposals, bankers said.

At least three consortia were expected to bid for the contract, including a group composed of Land Bank of the Philippines, Development Bank of the Philippines, Metropolitan Bank and Trust Co., Citibank, HSBC and ING Bank, said Land Bank vice president Alex Macapagal.

"It has to be a consortium because they are raising a big amount," Macapagal said during a Landbank press briefing Thursday night.

Henry Sy's Banco de Oro Universal Bank is also reportedly spearheading a separate consortium while the third interested group is composed of investment houses.

Macapagal said the syndicated facility for NFA would carry 10- to 15- year tenors.

He added that the NFA had obtained the approval of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas' Monetary Board last week for the P35-billion proposed borrowing.

Of the P35-billion facility, Macapagal said about P8 billion would represent new money for the agency while the rest would come in the form of refinancing for existing loans.

NFA, which is in pursuit of an aggressive deficit-reduction program, has found a good opportunity to unlock more values from the appreciation of its zero-coupon bonds which are used to back up some debts.

Years ago when the national government scrimped on giving sovereign guarantees to government-owned and controlled corporations in order to better control its contingent liabilities, the NFA resorted to "collateralized" debt financing facilities to raise money. Under this scheme, the borrower gets a loan in excess of what it needs and uses the differential to buy zero-coupon bonds as a collateral for the principal debt.

Through the years, the value of the collateral has gone up as the downtrend in interest rates resulted in capital appreciation. In the case of NFA, Macapagal estimated that the face value of the seven-year zero-coupon bonds tied to existing loans had gone up to P16.5 billion from only P11 billion when the bonds were purchased.

As such, the NFA is seen better off repaying the loans backed up by these zero-coupon bonds in order to free up these collateral for repricing and for use in contracting cheaper and longer-term borrowings.

Agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap earlier said it was also an option to liquidate some of these bond holdings to take advantage of the capital appreciation.

The government is looking at ways to plug the NFA's deficits, not just by unlocking cash values from bond holdings but also by selling a third of its 300 warehouses nationwide and seeking new investors for the 120-ha Food Terminal Inc. property in Taguig.

Economists have long urged the government to end the NFA's costly rice subsidy program.

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SYNOPSIS OF THE ANNUAL STATEMENT
As of December 31, 2005

ADMITTED ASSETS	
Bonds	₱ 347,854,420.80
Investment in Treasury Bills	128,240,000.00
Investment in Stocks	55,370,577.84
Real Estate	24,374,940.19
Security Fund	140,167.00
Other Investments	1,160,000.00
Cash on Hand and in Banks	41,288,567.34
Premiums Receivable	2,909,400.57
Premiums Due From Ceding Companies	2,148,184.83
Premium Reserve Withheld by Ceding Company	252,884.09
Reinsurance Recoverable on Losses	916,700.00
Accrued Investment Income	8,969,848.68
Other Assets	23,539,558.13
Total Admitted Assets	₱ 637,163,249.27
LIABILITIES	
Losses and Claims Payable	₱ 75,817,677.80
Loss Adjustment Expense Payable	6,173,069.42
Catastrophe Loss Reserve	85,458.60
Reserve for Unearned Premiums	59,031,111.55
Premiums Due to Reinsurers	8,224,854.99
Premiums Reserve Withheld for Reinsurers	3,272,992.84
Commissions Payable	1,051,914.00
Taxes Payable	3,457,253.57
Unearned Bond Discount	4,290,849.66
Other Liabilities	1,465,635.49
Total Liabilities	₱ 161,690,817.92
STOCKHOLDERS' EQUITY	
Capital Stock Paid-Up	₱ 150,000,000.00
Contributed Surplus	33,000.00
Special Surplus Funds:	
Fluctuation Reserve - Investment in Stocks	3,209,377.23
Fluctuation Reserve - Investment in Bonds	12,759,530.69
Retained Earnings	309,470,523.43
Total Stockholders' Equity	₱ 475,472,431.35
Total Liabilities & Stockholders' Equity	₱ 637,163,249.27

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Gov't posts ₱613M in energy savings

By Abigail L. Ho

THE GOVERNMENT HAS GENerated P613.86 million in savings by cutting down on fuel and electricity use from September 2005 to February 2007.

Energy Secretary Raphael Lotilla said that during the 17-month period, government agencies reduced their electricity consumption by 68 million kilowatt-hours, resulting in savings of P522.23 million.

Gasoline consumption also went down by 974,556 liters and diesel use by 1,596,072 liters, generating P91.63 million in savings for the government, he said.

He said both the public and private sectors should continue efforts to manage their energy use in the coming years.

"Let us continue our energy conservation and efficiency efforts and measures. Let your application of energy efficient concepts, systems and technologies become models not only here in our country, but also across the globe for wider replication and promotion of good energy management practices and programs," he said.

Last year, the government bestowed Don Emilio Abello Energy Efficiency Awards on 33 private companies, in recognition of their efforts to manage their energy use.

These firms registered savings of 72.42 million liters of oil equivalent, valued at P1.73 billion.

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X-TRAIL 2.0 4x4 AT	1,250,000	250,000	23,436	625,000	14,647
X-TRAIL 2.5 4x4 AT	1,360,000	272,000	25,498	680,000	15,936
SENTRA 1.6 GSX MT	750,000	150,000	14,061	375,000	8,788
SENTRA 1.6 GS AT	835,000	167,000	15,655	417,500	9,784

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Bangko Setral expected to scrap tiering system

Bank lending hoped to grow by 12-14% yearly

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE BANGKO SENTRAL NG PILIPINAS may scrap the tiering scheme on short-term money when bank lending growth improves further to 12-14 percent, a monetary official said.

The official said the BSP would like to see a clear uptrend in bank lending growth before lifting the tiering system.

Under this system, the BSP pays lower rates for short-term money borrowed from banks in excess of certain threshold levels. It was adopted to encourage banks to lend out instead of parking all their funds with the BSP.

"When lending growth hits to 12-14 percent, we can review the tiering system," the BSP official said.

Based on the BSP's latest report, bank lending in the country expanded by 9.9 percent to P1.98 trillion in March over a year ago due to an improving business climate and the revival of the tiering system.

This was higher than February's 7.5 percent growth.

However, the BSP earlier noted this growth was not commensurate with the 27-30 percent increase in the country's savings rate.

The BSP closely monitors trend and underlying forces to ensure that the growth of credit is consistent with price stability.

Since Nov. 2, the BSP has offered under the tiering system an interest rate of 7.5 percent on the first P5 billion of overnight borrowings from a bank; 5.5 percent on placements in excess of P5 billion up to P10 billion, and, 3.5 percent for anything greater than P10 billion.

Despite the banking industry's liquidity, lending levels remained below desired levels.

To mop up the excess money pumped into the local financial system by strong foreign inflows, the BSP has made its special deposit account (SDA) facility a more powerful monetary tool.

Under the SDAs, banks can place funds with the BSP and earn various interest rates depending on the term of the placements. Such alternative placements are not collateralized.

During the April monetary policy setting meet, the Monetary Board allowed banks' trust departments to tap the SDAs issued by the BSP to widen the use of this tool; allowed banks to use SDAs as compliance to the 50-percent liquidity floor or the portion of deposits and deposit substitutes required to be held in the form of negotiable and transferable government securities (a buffer in case of a bank run or heavy withdrawals), and allowed government-owned and -controlled corporations and financial institutions to place funds directly with the BSP.

Like the overnight borrowings, the SDAs are covered by a tiering system which means interest rates paid by the BSP decline in excess of certain quotas.

PSE may suspend trade of 9 firms

THE PHILIPPINE Stock Exchange has threatened to suspend trading of nine companies if they again fail to submit their annual reports.

The PSE has set the deadline on May 21 for their compliance.

In a memorandum, the PSE identified the companies that had failed to submit their financial reports ending on Dec. 31, 2006. According to the PSE, the firms failed to beat the May 2 extended deadline.

The firms are Abacus Consolidated Resources and Holdings, Diversified Financial Network, East Asia Power Resources, Fil-Estate Corp., Forum Pacific, Gotesco Land, Marsteel Consolidated, Metro Alliance Holdings & Equities and Philippine National Construction Corp.

The PSE said these firms have until May 21 to settle their penalties and submit their reports.

The PSE also said it has kept its trading suspension on another nine companies that have yet to submit their reports on the same period.

Also, the Securities and Exchange Commission has ordered the suspension of registration of Forum Pacific Inc. and Unioil Resources and Holdings Inc. for violations of the Securities Code. *Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson*

NEDA CHIEF MEETS AMCHAM

Economic Planning Secretary and National Economic and Development Authority Director General Romulo L. Neri (right) presents to members of the American Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines Inc. (AmCham) some of the country's major infrastructure programs, some of which are open for private sector funding or partnerships between the government and the private sector. With Neri during the forum were (from left) Philippine Business Environment Council chair Peter L. Wallace and Neda infrastructure staff director Ruben S. Reinoso.

Alliance group sets aside ₱10B for debt payment, acquisitions

ALLIANCE GLOBAL GROUP, THE HOLDING firm of property mogul Andrew Tan, is earmarking P10 billion for debt repayment, acquisitions in the food and beverage sector, and other investments, company officials said.

Following an investor's briefing last Friday, Alliance Global and Emperador Distillers Inc. president Wintson Co said that of the total budget, P1 billion would be spent for acquisitions while another P1 billion would be used to repay debt.

EDI is the brandy subsidiary of Alliance Global.

"The remaining P8 billion will form part of (the budget for) expansion and refinery integration," he said.

AGI earlier said it would raise P14.4 billion through the offering of new shares to fund its projects this year.

The Securities and Exchange Commission had approved the issuance by Alliance Global of 1.8 billion new shares. Other shareholders will sell another 1.33 billion secondary shares, which would raise about P14.08 billion.

Up to 470 million issued and outstanding shares will cover any over-allotment pertaining to the offer. The offer price is set at P8 per share, Alliance Global earlier said in documents filed with the SEC.

Capital spending this year estimated at P10 billion will consist of the acquisition and construction of an alcohol distillery, investment in flavored alcoholic beverages, and the planned acquisition of a food and beverage business.

Co said EDI was planning to export brandy products to Thailand and Shanghai.

Alliance Global owns 100 percent of EDI, the manufacturer of Emperador and Generoso brandy.

Alliance Global is also the holding company of property developer Megaworld Corp. It also owns 49 percent of the local franchise holder of McDonald's.

Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

Philweb eyes TV Sabong, 2 other games

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

INTERNET GAMING FIRM PHILweb Corp. will seek the approval of the government for the launch of three new innovative games of chance.

In an interview, Philweb president Dennis O. Valdes said Philweb was keen on bringing cockfighting onto the Internet platform, which would be called "TV Sabong."

TV Sabong will be an Internet-based version of one of the country's most popular pastimes. In its initial phase, TV Sabong betting stations will be put up in participating cockpits where live cockfights held in another cockpit and captured on view and uplinked by encrypted satellite would be shown. The plan is for TV Sabong to be expanded to all online players.

Philweb is working with originating cockpit operators to feature derbies exclusive to TV Sabong. These derbies will feature known breeders over a 20-match game day.

Another game being proposed is "Textingo 9," envisioned to be the country's largest daily mobile phone and load-based game of chance. To play this game, participants will select nine numbers between 1 and 40. These are sent through text messaging to an access number that has yet to be determined. Everyday, the Textingo 9 computer will randomly select 10 numbers between 1 and 40. To win, the participant's choice of 9 numbers must be the same as 9 of the 10 numbers selected by the computer. A 9-for-9 match wins a minimum of P6 million. The grand prize grows daily whether or not it is won, as a percentage of total bets placed is added to the prize.

Philweb estimates that the total jackpot may grow to P50 million or more, which would make this one of the most lucrative mobile games in the world.

Also, Valdes said Philweb was proposing an Internet casino game called "Play Away, " a version of its Internet casino station games. Play Away will target the segment of the gaming community that wants to experience the excitement of casino play in the home or office.

To also facilitate bets, Philweb has developed ePitaka, an electronic wallet that will let players transfer funds from their credit cards, bank accounts or mobile phone wallets into a Philweb-managed electronic wallet.

Philweb's e-Pitaka will provide a mechanism by which players can fund their gaming activity and receive money, making it easy for them to claim their winnings.

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of May 18, 2007)

52-WEEK HIGH	52-WEEK LOW	STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
		BANKS					
17.5	5	Asiatrust Development Bank Inc.	11.75	12.25	11.75	12.25	11,000
73	42.5	Bank of the Philippine Islands	68	69	68	69	2,805,700
65.5	30.5	Banco de Oro Universal Bank	64	65	64	65	381,600
935	630	China Banking Corp.	920	920	920	920	4,520
20	18.18	Citystate Savings Bank	19.75	19.75	19.75	19.75	600
119	60	Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	111	114	110	114	200,680
0.63	0.36	Export and Industry Bank, Inc.	0.53	0.53	0.53	0.53	4,170,000
68.5	29	Metropolitan Bank and Trust Co.	63.5	64	63	63.5	1,356,400
55	30.5	Philippine National Bank	47	47	47	47	22,800
66	38.5	Philippine Savings Bank	62	62	62	62	1,300
39.57	13.04	Rizal Commercial Banking Corp.	29	30	29	29.5	3,516,600
90	41	Security Bank Corp.	84	84	84	84	231,900
65.77	40.55	Union Bank of the Philippines	62	62.5	62	62	857,700
		OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
0.85	0.6	Bankard Inc.	0.65	0.7	0.65	0.7	60,000
7.7	1.5	CitisecOnline.com Inc.	6.6	6.6	6.6	6.6	141,000
2,000.00	1,500.00	Manulife Financial Corp.	1,660.00	1,660.00	1,660.00	1,660.00	560
5	4.15	National Reinsurance Corp. of the Phils.	4.3	4.3	4.2	4.25	23,360,000
2.4	0.97	PCI Leasing and Finance Inc.	2.36	2.38	2.36	2.38	56,000
1,005.00	200	The Philippine Stock Exchange, Inc	600	600	590	600	1,200
2,250.00	1,895.00	Sun Life Financial Inc	2,195.00	2,195.00	2,195.00	2,195.00	690
1.94	1.02	Vantage Corp.	1.76	1.76	1.7	1.7	4,197,000
		ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
0.37	0.16	East Asia Power Resources Corp.	0.31	0.31	0.3	0.3	2,300,000
62.5	41	First Gen Corp.	59	60	59	59.5	1,319,700
82.5	40.5	First Phil. Holdings Corp.	75	78.5	75	78.5	1,862,600
12.75	6.6	Manila Water Co. Inc.	12	12.25	12	12	2,520,100
87	13	Manila Electric Co. "A"	80	87	80	87	1,131,500
87.5	20.25	Manila Electric Co. "B"	80	87.5	80	87.5	5,558,500
6.8	4.1	PNOC Energy Development Corp.	5.8	5.8	5.7	5.8	10,527,000
5.7	3.35	Petron Corp.	5	5.2	5	5.1	15,538,000
1.62	0.89	Trans-Asia Oil and Energy Dev't Corp.	1.48	1.5	1.48	1.5	3,649,000
		FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
5.9	2.85	Alaska Milk Corp.	5.6	5.6	5.6	5.6	108,000
2.95	1.88	Alliance Tuna International Inc.	2.22	2.26	2.2	2.2	1,261,000
28.5	19.5	Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	25.5	26.5	25.5	26.5	11,600
61	30	Jollibee Foods Corp.	53	53.5	53	53	381,000
1.62	0.89	RFM Corp.	1.42	1.42	1.4	1.4	877,000
4.05	2.34	Roxas Holdings	2.42	2.42	2.38	2.38	15,000
80	61	San Miguel Corp. "A"	74	76.5	72	76.5	380,800
88	68	San Miguel Corp "B"	77.5	81.5	77.5	80	194,500
22	15.75	Universal Robina Corp.	15.75	16	15.75	15.75	2,277,000
		CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
5.3	1.07	EEI Corp.	5	5.3	4.95	5.3	4,506,000
9.2	4.2	Holcim Philippines Inc.	8.9	9.2	8.9	9	207,000
7.5	2.04	Philippine National Const. Corp.	5.8	5.8	5.8	5.8	1,000
7	1.1	Republic Cement Corp.	5.6	5.6	5.6	5.6	20,000
2	0.245	Southeast Asia Cement Holdings Inc.	1.8	1.84	1.8	1.82	4,931,000
		CHEMICALS					
6.3	1.42	Chemrez Technologies Inc.	6	6.1	5.9	6.1	3,184,000
0.82	0.5	Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	0.65	0.65	0.65	0.65	20,000
		DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
0.43	[illegible]	[illegible] Resources Inc.	0.3	0.3	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
		HOLDING FIRMS					
4.05	1.7	A. Soriano Corp.	3.75	3.75	3.75	3.75	310,000
0.0925	0.022	AJO.net Holdings Inc.	0.0675	0.07	0.0675	0.07	7,100,000
0.97	0.17	APC Group Inc.	0.89	0.94	0.87	0.93	126,980,000
3.6	1.4	ATN Holdings Inc. "A"	1.74	1.74	1.74	1.74	30,000
0.018	0.006	Abacus Cons. Res. and Hold'gs Inc. "A"	0.012	0.012	0.011	0.012	77,500,000
0.019	0.0005	Abacus Cons. Res. and Hold'gs Inc. "B"	0.012	0.012	0.012	0.012	20,000,000
9.7	4.85	Aboitiz Equity Ventures Inc.	8.8	9	8.8	9	7,033,000
0.016	0.0065	Alcorn Gold Resources Corp.	0.014	0.015	0.014	0.014	63,800,000
7.3	3.5	Alliance Global Group Inc.	6.5	6.9	6.5	6.7	16,156,000
1.04	0.45	Alsons Consolidated Resources Inc.	0.78	0.83	0.78	0.83	880,000
2.26	0.83	Anglo-Philippine Holdings Corp.	2.1	2.12	2.08	2.12	5,711,000
10	4.5	Atok-Big Wedge Co. Inc. "A"	6	6	6	6	5,000
566.67	272.92	Ayala Corp.	520	520	515	520	68,640
14	7.92	Bacnotan Consolidated Industries Inc.	14	14	14	14	2,000
6.9	0.7	Balabac Resources and Holdings Co. Inc.	4.6	4.6	4.6	4.6	94,000
4.45	0.97	Benpres Holdings Corp.	3.8	4.05	3.8	3.95	32,830,000
9.1	3.25	DMCI Holdings Inc.	8.6	9	8.6	8.9	3,076,000
6	2.55	Filinvest Development Corp.	5.4	5.4	5.4	5.4	251,000
3.55	1.14	House of Investments Inc.	2.95	2.95	2.95	2.95	12,000
14.5	5.3	JG Summit Holdings Inc.	12	12	12	12	543,000
0.88	0.1	Mabuhay Holdings Corp.	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	40,000
13.25	0.88	Magnum Holdings Inc.	11.75	11.75	11	11.75	1,493,300
4.55	0.19	Multitech Investments Corp.	4.2	4.25	4.1	4.15	4,318,000
5.4	1.2	PAL Holdings Inc.	3.75	3.75	3.6	3.6	190,000
1.26	0.8	Prime Media Holdings Inc.	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	80,000
0.5	0.155	Prime Orion Philippines Inc.	0.47	0.48	0.47	0.47	9,390,000
422.5	205	SM Investments Corp.	417.5	422.5	417.5	422.5	269,290
0.58	0.115	Sinophil Corp.	0.46	0.58	0.46	0.58	375,440,000
0.85	0.51	Solid Group Inc.	0.72	0.72	0.72	0.72	100,000
1.38	0.68	South China Resources Inc.	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	35,000
0.24	0.08	Wellex Industries Inc.	0.165	0.165	0.155	0.16	23,040,000
		PROPERTY					
2.16	0.75	A Brown Co. Inc.	1.68	1.8	1.66	1.78	7,501,000
15.75	8.54	Ayala Land Inc.	15.5	15.75	15.25	15.25	45,332,100
1.72	0.95	Belle Corp.	1.38	1.44	1.38	1.44	66,144,000
3.2	1.18	C and P Homes Inc.	2.9	3.2	2.9	3.15	4,363,000
4.5	1.8	Cebu Holdings Inc.	4.25	4.45	4.25	4.45	564,000
4.2	1.42	City and Land Developers Inc.	4	4.1	4	4.1	15,000
2.9	1	Cityland Development Corp.	2.6	2.6	2.4	2.4	60,000
0.54	0.24	Crown Equities Inc.	0.48	0.51	0.48	0.51	5,420,000
0.54	0.165	Cyber Bay Corp.	0.53	0.54	0.52	0.52	15,030,000
0.31	0.14	EIB Realty Developers Inc.	0.24	0.25	0.24	0.25	630,000
3.1	0.64	Edsa Properties Holdings Inc.	2.75	2.75	2.7	2.7	535,000
0.99	0.44	Empire East Land Holdings Inc.	0.78	0.79	0.78	0.79	19,230,000
0.195	0.027	Ever Gotesco Resources and Hold'gs Inc.	0.18	0.195	0.17	0.195	55,770,000
1.12	0.38	Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.8	0.81	0.79	0.8	8,140,000
2.04	0.93	Filinvest Land Inc.	1.82	1.9	1.82	1.88	74,347,000
0.33	0.05	Gotesco Land Inc. "A"	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	1,000,000
0.33	0.0525	Gotesco Land Inc. "B"	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	90,000
3.35	2.04	Highlands Prime Inc.	2.44	2.44	2.44	2.44	2,000
0.016	0.0038	Interport Resources Corp. "A"	0.011	0.011	0.01	0.01	7,000,000
0.69	0.2	Kuok Phil. Properties Inc.	0.42	0.42	0.4	0.4	4,210,000
0.99	0.18	MRC Allied Industries Inc.	0.74	0.75	0.72	0.72	1,460,000
0.034	0.011	Marsteel Consolidated Inc. "A"	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02	3,900,000
0.036	0.014	Marsteel Consolidated Inc. "B"	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02	5,700,000
4.05	1.26	Megaworld Corp.	3.9	4.05	3.9	3.95	91,111,000
6.4	1.5	Metro Pacific Investments Corp.	4.65	4.65	4.6	4.6	216,000
0.26	0.1	Phil. Estates Corp.	0.19	0.19	0.19	0.19	500,000
0.87	0.25	Philippine Realty and Holdings Corp.	0.61	0.62	0.6	0.62	6,350,000
3.5	1.1	Polar Property Holdings Corp.	3.2	3.4	3.2	3.3	186,000
23	9.6	Robinson Land Corp.	19	19.25	19	19.25	12,223,900
5.2	1.23	SM Development Corp.	5	5.1	5	5.1	511,000
13	6.9	SM Prime Holdings Inc.	12	12	11.75	12	3,952,200
0.27	0.06	Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.2	0.215	0.195	0.21	21,250,000
1.74	0.3	Zipporah Realty Holdings Inc.	1.32	1.4	1.32	1.34	2,372,000
		MEDIA					
32	13.5	ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	31	31.5	31	31.5	75,000
1.14	0.97	Manila Bulletin Publishing Corp..	1.06	1.06	1.04	1.04	101,000
2.12	1.1	Digital Telecommunications Phils. Inc.	1.64	1.64	1.58	1.6	5,712,000
1,445.00	820	Globe Telecom Inc.	1,340.00	1,345.00	1,340.00	1,340.00	60,920
2,820.00	1,700.00	Phil. Long Distance Telephone Co.	2,525.00	2,555.00	2,520.00	2,540.00	55,540
7.9	3.1	Pilipino Telephone Corp.	6.6	6.6	6.5	6.6	1,102,000
		INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
0.39	0.155	Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.25	0.26	0.25	0.25	2,000,000
9	2	Diversified Financial Network Inc.	8.1	8.4	8.1	8.4	216,000
7.6	2	IPVG Corp.	7	7.1	6.9	7	1,324,000
0.075	0.046	ISM Communications Corp.	0.065	0.065	0.055	0.065	100,000
0.033	0.011	Imperial Resources Inc. "A"	0.028	0.028	0.028	0.028	500,000
2.9	1.78	Ionics Inc.	2.22	2.22	2.18	2.18	184,000
0.0675	0.038	Island Information and Technology Inc.	0.0575	0.0575	0.0575	0.0575	7,000,000
1.84	1.12	Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.44	1.46	1.44	1.44	310,000
0.06	0.025	PhilWeb.Com Inc	0.049	0.05	0.049	0.05	72,800,000
5.8	1	Transpacific Broadband Group Int'l. Inc.	2.12	2.18	2.12	2.18	177,000
		TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
1.88	1.14	Aboitiz Transport System Corp.	1.64	1.64	1.64	1.64	142,000
6.8	2.5	Asian Terminals Inc.	6.2	6.4	6.2	6.3	82,000
32	12.5	Int'l Container Terminal Services Inc.	28	28.5	28	28.5	366,000
2.14	0.86	Keppel Philippines Marine Inc.	1.98	1.98	1.94	1.94	800,000
		HOTEL & LEISURE					
4.25	1.26	Leisure and Resorts World Corp.	3.95	3.95	3.85	3.9	1,306,000
0.54	0.18	Premiere Entertainment Productions Inc.	0.49	0.52	0.49	0.5	12,480,000
1.7	0.42	Waterfront Philippines Inc.	0.97	0.99	0.97	0.97	5,390,000
		EDUCATION					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
		DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
18	6.6	JTH Davies Holdings Inc.	8.5	8.6	8.2	8.6	32,000
4.4	1.84	Macroasia Corp.	4.3	4.4	4.2	4.25	2,162,000
16.25	13	Pacific Online Systems Corp.	15.5	16	15.25	15.75	1,589,800
30	9.5	Paxys Inc.	26.5	27	26.5	27	208,500
		MINING					
0.018	0.007	Abra Mining and Industrial Corp.	0.012	0.012	0.012	0.012	113,000,000
7.6	2.6	Apex Mining Co. Inc. "A"	6.5	6.5	6.4	6.4	376,000
7.7	2.55	Apex Mining Co. Inc. "B"	6.6	6.6	6.6	6.6	330,000
2.22	0.0602	GEOGRACE Resources Philippines Inc.	2.12	2.22	2.1	2.2	91,694,000
0.38	0.215	Lepanto Consolidated Mining Co. "A"	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	14,620,000
0.42	0.225	Lepanto Consolidated Mining Co. "B"	0.34	0.35	0.34	0.35	3,160,000
0.037	0.0154	Manila Mining Corp. "A"	0.035	0.037	0.035	0.037	654,200,000
0.04	0.017	Manila Mining Corp. "B"	0.039	0.04	0.039	0.04	214,200,000
0.024	0.0075	Omico Corp.	0.019	0.02	0.019	0.02	57,800,000
5.6	2.65	Philex Mining Corp.	5.2	5.2	5.1	5.1	7,142,000
0.87	0.25	United Paragon Mining Corp.	0.77	0.77	0.74	0.74	470,000
1.8	0.41	Vulcan Industrial and Mining Corp.	1.38	1.38	1.38	1.38	5,455,000
		OIL					
0.58	0.23	Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.44	0.44	0.42	0.43	12,730,000
0.018	0.008	Oriental Pet. and Minerals Corp. "A"	0.017	0.018	0.017	0.018	144,800,000
0.019	0.009	Oriental Pet. and Minerals Corp. "B"	0.019	0.019	0.018	0.018	3,400,000
14.62	9	Petroenergy Resources Corp.	10.5	10.5	10.25	10.25	67,900
0.018	0.0089	The Philodrill Corp.	0.017	0.018	0.017	0.017	255,900,000

BY INQUIRER RESEARCH

SOURCE: TECHNISTOCK

CURRENCIES

May 20, 2007 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.740960	1.000000	46.7900
Japan	Yen	0.006108	0.008244	0.3857
United Kingdom	Pound	1.463026	1.974500	92.3869
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.094744	0.127866	5.9829
Switzerland	Franc	0.603831	0.814930	38.1306
Canada	Dollar	0.674643	0.910498	42.6022
Singapore	Dollar	0.486194	0.656168	30.7021
Australia	Dollar	0.608642	0.821423	38.4344
Bahrain	Dinar*	1.965568	2.652731	124.1213
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.197573	0.266645	12.4763
Brunei	Dollar	0.484604	0.654022	30.6017
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000084	0.000114	0.0053
Thailand	Baht	0.022385	0.030211	1.4136
UAE	Dirham	0.201754	0.272287	12.7403
European Union	Euro	1.000000	1.349600	63.1478
Korea	Won	0.000799	0.001078	0.0504
China	Yuan**	0.096596	0.130366	6.0998
Argentina	Peso	0.240963	0.325203	15.2162
Brazil	Real	0.378620	0.510986	23.9090
Denmark	Kroner	0.134154	0.181054	8.4715
India	Rupee	0.018251	0.024631	1.1525
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.217930	0.294118	13.7618
Mexico	New Peso	0.068586	0.092563	4.3310
New Zealand	Dollar	0.540965	0.730087	34.1608
Norway	Kroner	0.122366	0.165145	7.7271
Pakistan	Rupee	0.012191	0.016453	0.7698
South Africa	Rand	0.105625	0.142552	6.6700
Sweden	Kroner	0.108372	0.146259	6.8435
Syria	Pound	0.014274	0.019264	0.9014
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.022251	0.030030	1.4051
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000345	0.000466	0.0218

Source: Reuters' forex closing prices as of NY time—May 17, 2007
* Various banks in Bahrain as quoted in Reuters' Screen.
** Asian time closing rate as of May 17, 2007

'BOOM TO LAST 5 YEARS'

OFW remittances fueling growth in real estate

By Daxim L. Lucas

SPECIAL REPORT

UP TO A THIRD OF THE RECORD-high foreign remittances sent home by expatriate Filipino workers are spent on the real estate sector, making the current property market boom more durable than previous episodes, according to industry players and market watchers.

In an interview, Century Properties managing director John Victor Antonio said his firm noticed this trend as early as two years ago when dollar remittances sent by overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) started to pick up.

"Our rule of thumb is that 30 percent of all remittances end up in spending for the real estate sector, whether it is used to buy or property or spent on housing improvement," he said.

More importantly, the trend marks a significant departure from the pattern established in previous decades where the bulk of OFW remittances was spent on consumer goods, with little left for savings and investments.

In 2006, OFWs sent back to their local beneficiaries $12.6 billion through the banking system alone. The central bank estimates that this amount is even understated by an average of 30 percent because of funds sent home through informal channels.

At the low end, this means that as much as $4.2 billion in OFW funds were spent on the real estate sector last year—a figure that will rise further, given the central bank's expectations of as much as $14 billion in remittances for 2007.

"OFWs are really the main factor driving up this market," said Antonio, whose firm has launched several projects aimed at this cash-rich sector. "In our case, at least 50 percent of our sales come from OFW [buyers]."

For other firms, this level could go to as high as 60 percent of all sales, he said.

The trend has not gone unnoticed.

Large and small real estate developers are now investing heavily in wooing expatriate Filipino buyers. These include property blue-chip Ayala Land Inc., Megaworld Corp. and Robinsons Land Corp.

These firms embark on periodic sales tours in Europe and the US aimed at attracting Filipino buyers, some even setting up permanent sales offices in areas with high concentration of potential clients.

Indeed, the latest data from the National Statistical Coordination Board revealed that the property sector had recorded the fastest growth rate among various monitored industries in recent months.

In the fourth quarter of 2006, for example, gross revenues of the real estate sector grew by 40 percent compared the same period in the previous year.

MEGAWORLD Corp. chair Andrew Tan presents to President Macapagal-Arroyo a scale-model of Megaworld properties inside Fort Bonifacio during her recent visit to the Philippine Stock Exchange. Megaworld is just one of the real estate companies cashing in on the property boom. PDI PHOTO

This marks the 15th consecutive quarter of double-digit growth for the sector since 2003

In contrast, the financial sector grew by only 17.3 percent, the trade sector by 12.3 percent and private services by 10.6 percent.

The manufacturing and the transportation and communication sector—the previous darling of the economy—grew by 8.5 percent and 8.4 percent, respectively.

According to Unicapital Securities analyst Ron Rodrigo, all these indicators point to a real estate boom that will last longer than the one experienced in the mid-1990s.

"This will last for some time," he said in an interview. "This could go [on] for another five to seven years."

He stressed, however, that the boom will be skewed in favor of firms which cater to the lower end of the property sector, in particular, those which invest heavily in affordable or mid-market developments.

"These are the properties that go from P500,000 to P1.5 million and from P1.5 million to P2.5 million or P3 million per unit," he said.

Rodrigo is confident that the present boom would sidestep the pitfalls of its 1990s version, mainly because present-day buyers acquire property for their actually use.

This contrasts with the white-hot speculation that contributed to the 1997 East Asian financial crisis, where buyers would acquire two or three units at a time as "investments" meant to be sold off at a better price.

Rodrigo said that strong market conditions are also supported by the profile of workers going abroad, many of whom are now highly paid professionals, compared to laborers and domestic helpers that were prevalent up to the late 1990s.

"Nowadays, you have high-earning professionals like nurses and information technology people who are highly valued by their employers abroad," he said. "As long as deployment numbers keep rising, this market will stay strong."

It is a fact that Century Properties' Antonio is counting on.

The firm will embark on an international roadshow in the next months for showcase its high-rise and subdivision projects to Filipinos abroad in the hopes of capturing a bigger slice of the pie.

"Up to 70 percent of all our online inquiries come from abroad," he said. "There are from overseas Filipinos with large investing capacities. They want to stretch the value of their dollar, so they buy properties here."

Despite the bullishness, Antonio keeps a close eye on indicators that may point to a repeat of the previous decade's property market crash.

"What we have now is different from 1997," he said, echoing Rodrigo's confidence.

Around the world, OFWs eager to buy homes are hoping they are right.

Napocor eyes dedicated power plant ...

From page B2

grid and providing it with a dedicated power source.

Energy Secretary Raphael Lotilla said this was a viable and practical option for the Bicol region as it was often hit by super typhoons, citing last year's Milenyo and Reming.

"Napocor is ready to do islanding operations in Bicol. We're working with Chevron in (the Tiwi geothermal plant) to ensure that the facilities there will not be as easily damaged by typhoons as in the past. It's very important for us to work on these things," he said.

According to Napocor, it would greatly benefit the Bicol region to be taken as a separate "island" instead of being connected to the Luzon grid as this would mean a dedicated power source for the area.

This would make Bicol less prone to transmission-related power outages during the typhoon season.

Typhoons Milenyo and Reming left the Bicol region without electricity for weeks and even months in some areas last year.

Repairs are still being conducted in the region, particularly on the lines and towers of National Transmission Corp. These are expected to be completed by July for the Milenyo-related repairs and by December for the Reming-related repairs.

Last May 2, six Transco towers along the Naga-Tayabas line collapsed, plunging some parts of the region into darkness for almost two weeks.

Customs taps nontraditional revenue sources

From page B12

Morales said Customs Memorandum Order No. 7-2007 lifted the 30-percent retention rate earlier enjoyed by CBW operators.

Prior to the lifting of the retention scheme, CBW operators are allowed to pay only 70 percent of their liabilities to the BOC for every payment period, and pay the balance in the next period.

With the lifting of the scheme, CBW operators are now required to pay in full their liabilities to the BOC. These liabilities are composed of duties on imported goods that were not used in the production of export products.

Morales said the BOC expected to generate P1 billion in additional revenue this year from the lifting of the 30-percent retention rate.

The BOC has so far collected only P57.4 billion in revenue in the first four months of the year. It hopes to shore up collection of duties and other types of revenue to help it meet the P105.3 billion revenue target for the first half assigned to it by the national government.

PSBank
PHILIPPINE SAVINGS BANK
A METROBANK SUBSIDIARY

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF CONDITION

(Bank and Financial Subsidiaries)
As of March 30, 2007

ASSETS	AMOUNT
Cash and Cash Items	610,686,681.49
Due from Bangko Sentral	4,304,562,430.32
Due from Other Banks	1,950,319,009.62
Interbank Loans Receivable	1,595,276,006.71
Trading Account Securities (Net)	45,025,434.35
Investments in Bonds and Other Debt Instruments (Net)	14,592,378,691.56
Loans, Discounts & Advances (Net)	33,069,289,900.37
Equity Investments (Net)	145,546,789.21
Bank Premises, Furniture, Fixtures and Equipment (Net)	2,039,920,833.08
Other Assets (Net):	
Property Owned/Acquired	1,661,151,204.76
Others	2,581,264,386.49
TOTAL ASSETS	62,595,421,367.96

LIABILITIES	
Demand Deposits	5,757,741,320.70
Savings Deposits	8,868,136,037.95
Time Deposits	37,777,865,907.04
Due to Bangko Sentral	25,883,308.87
Due to Banks	-
Outstanding Checks/Payment Orders	351,636,765.81
Bills Payable:	
BSP-Rediscount/Special Programs	-
Others	1,966,517,947.02
Unearned Income and Other Deferred Credits	45,280,356.86
Other Liabilities	1,503,883,732.63
TOTAL LIABILITIES	56,296,945,376.88

CAPITAL ACCOUNTS	
Capital Stock	2,019,383,150.00
Surplus	3,747,703,969.68
Surplus Reserves	531,388,871.40
TOTAL CAPITAL ACCOUNTS	6,298,475,991.08
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND CAPITAL ACCOUNTS	62,595,421,367.96

CONTINGENT ACCOUNTS	
Bills for Collection	11,854.00
Assets Held Under Trust and Investment Management Agreements	300,459,358.97
Invested in:	
Other Securities, Debt Instruments and Shares of Stock	212,585,683.37
Other Assets	87,873,675.60
Accountabilities	
Trust & Other Fiduciary	296,802,914.53
Unearned Income & Other Accountabilities	3,656,444.44
Other Contingent Accounts	54,090,886.17
TOTAL CONTINGENT ACCOUNTS	354,562,099.14

Additional Information:	
1. Deposits of	
a. Banks	29,692,831.96
b. Trust Department	71,399,772.43
2. a. Total Non-Performing Loans	3,065,145,669.70
b. Classified Loans and Other Risk Assets	5,680,886,208.40
c. General Loan Loss Reserve	274,466,384.94
d. Specific Loan Loss Reserve	1,565,771,487.63
e. Total DOSRI Loans/Advances	1,168,488,616.68
f. Past Due DOSRI Loans Advances	0.00
g. Ratio of Non-Performing Loans to Total Loan Portfolio	7.83%
h. Ratio of Total DOSRI Loans/Advances to Total Loan Portfolio	2.98%
i. Ratio of Past Due DOSRI to Total Loan Portfolio	0.00%
j. Return on Equity	16.74%
3. Compliance with Magna Carta Law	
a. Prescribed Ratio of Compliance for 6% (Small Enterprises)	40.42%
b. Prescribed Ratio of Compliance for 2% (Medium Enterprises)	4.54%

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Noli S. Gomez
Senior Vice President

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
CITY OF MAKATI) S. S.

We, PERFECTO RAMON Z. DIMAYUGA JR. and PASCUAL M. GARCIA III of the above-mentioned bank do solemnly swear that all matters set forth in the above statement of condition are true and correct to the best of our knowledge and belief.

(Sgd) PERFECTO RAMON Z. DIMAYUGA JR.
First Vice President

(Sgd) PASCUAL M. GARCIA III
President

SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN to before me this 27 April 2007 at City of Makati, affiant exhibiting to me their Community Tax Certificates No. 21354044 issued at Quezon City on February 19, 2007 and No. 22887853 issued at Quezon City on February 17, 2007.

(Sgd) ATTY. JOSE HERNANDEZ DY
Notary Public
Until December 31, 2008
PTR No. 5273383 - Mla 1-05-07
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Concerns seen to dash RP hope for rating upgrade

By Doris C. Dumlao

US-BASED CREDIT WATCHDOG STANDARD & Poor's still has lingering concerns on the revenue stability and administrative efficiency of the Philippine government, dashing hopes for a credit rating upgrade at this time.

In a statement Friday night, S&P credit analyst Agost Benard also noted that key debt ratios pointed to "considerably higher level of vulnerability to economic shocks or negative policy changes" as against similarly rated sovereigns.

In the end, S&P merely reaffirmed its "BB-/B" foreign currency and "BB+/B" local currency sovereign credit ratings on the Philippines, with a stable outlook. The ratings are three notches below the much-coveted investment grade.

Benard said the stable outlook reflected a balance between the achievements in fiscal consolidation and public sector reforms and continued risks to revenue and deficit targets in light of weak collection efficiency.

But he said the outlook could be revised to "positive" if additional revenue measures would be implemented early on, including the passage in Congress of existing fiscal initiatives that are currently on hold in the legislature.

A "positive" outlook indicates a strong possibility of a credit rating upgrade over the next 12 to 24 months.

Conversely, Benard warned that the outlook on the ratings could again come under pressure if fiscal correction was endangered by stalled reforms, making the government's balanced budget goal unattainable, leading to continued expenditure cuts at the expense of future growth prospects.

"Considerable progress has been attained by the current administration in addressing the country's key credit constraint," Benard said.

After the implementation of the key fiscal reform initiatives, he noted that revenue collection was boosted to 16.3 percent of gross domestic product from a low of 14.6 percent in 2004. With the reforms, coupled with ongoing expenditure cuts, he noted that the government deficit had declined impressively from a peak at 4.8 percent of GDP in 2002 to 1.1 percent in 2006.

Also, he said that improved public sector financial performance, especially that of National Power Corp., had stemmed the accumulation of contingent liabilities to the government, resulting in a consolidated public sector surplus of 0.1 percent of GDP for 2006.

Benard also pointed out that the revenue shortfalls seen this year highlight a weakness, which, "in the absence of further revenue-generating steps, will put a question mark over the administration's ability to create the fiscal base necessary for attaining its goals of a balanced budget from 2008 onward."

RUBBER DAM UP FOR REPAIRS Agriculture Secretary Arthur C. Yap (right) inspects the damaged portion of Baka Dam, the first rubber dam in Asia completed in 1984, in San Vicente, Llanera, Nueva Ecija. The National Irrigation Administration will release P14 million for the rehabilitation of the dam which will benefit at least 1,600 hectares of rice land.

BIR's excise tax collection suffers double-digit drop

Cut in cigaret consumption said to account for decline

By Michelle V. Remo

THE BUREAU OF INTERNAL REVenue's excise tax collection suffered a double-digit drop in the first quarter from a year ago.

BIR Commissioner Jose Mario Buñag said that the decline in the collection rate had to do partly with the reduced consumption of cigarets.

Preliminary data from the BIR showed that excise tax collection reached only P10.4 billion in the first three months of the year, 27-percent lower than the P14.2 billion recorded in the first quarter of last year.

The national government, which is trying to reduce the budget deficit, has been pressing the BIR to increase revenue collection. The bureau had fallen short of its overall target, collecting even less the previous quarter.

"Although we want to collect more, we cannot force people to smoke more cigarets," Buñag said in a briefing Friday.

Asked whether a formal study had been conducted, showing a decline in the consumption of cigarets, Buñag said that his was a reasonable assumption, which could explain the decline in excise tax collection.

The drop in excise tax rates came about despite the increase in tax rates slapped on cigarets and alcohol last January. Under the Sin Tax law, which took effect in 2005, excise tax rates on so-called "sin" products shall increase every two years over the medium term.

Of the total excise tax collection in the first quarter, P4.5 billion was accounted for by taxes on cigarets. This represented a 30-percent drop from the P6.5 billion recorded in the same period last year.

Another P4.5 billion of the excise tax collection during the period was accounted for by alcoholic beverages. Unlike tax collection from cigarets, revenue generated from alcohol marked a 1.54-percent rise from the P4.4 billion recorded in the first quarter of last year.

The government generated P800 million in excise tax on petroleum products, a 73-percent drop from the P2.8 billion recorded a year ago.

But authorities said the drop in excise tax on petroleum was brought on by the government's decision to cut the tax rates applied on petroleum products. The tax cut was intended to mitigate the impact of the increase in value-added tax rate on consumers' purchasing power.

Collection of excise tax on mineral products and miscellaneous fees accounted for over P600 million of the BIR's total excise tax collection for the first quarter.

Buñag said that, besides the likely reduced consumption of cigarets, the move of manufacturers to frontload their production also led to the drop in tax collection.

He said cigaret manufacturers advanced production in December last year and increased stock in warehouses to avoid the higher excise tax rates starting January. Excise tax is charged once products are taken out of manufacturing plants.

Also, the decision of a great number of cigaret consumers to shift from higher-priced cigarets to lesser brands, following the increase in excise tax rates, could account for the lower collection, the BIR chief said.

The failure to increase excise tax collection, despite the higher excise tax rates, was partly blamed for the BIR's tax collection shortfall in the first quarter.

The BIR, whose underperformance in revenue collection is blamed by critics on inefficiency and corruption, collected P143.1 billion in the first quarter. Its collection target for the period was set at P155.2 billion.

Regulators urged to loosen their grip on insurance firms

INSURANCE COMPANIES ARE URGING regulators to grant them the same investment flexibility enjoyed by banks.

They said that low interest rates on government securities require placement in alternative financial instruments for the industry to sustain growth.

"Regulators have to loosen their grip a bit ... Where banks are allowed to invest, insurance firms should also be allowed to invest," said Andrew Alcid, president of Philippine AXA Life Insurance Corp.

Alcid said one common concern among insurance companies was the tight regulation on their investment activities.

Having more freedom to invest in alternative forms of financial instruments will allow insurance firms to ably address the problem of low interest rates.

Currently, bulk of insurance firms' investable funds are placed in government issued Treasury bonds.

Alcid said the drop in interest rates on government securities, which had hit all-time lows earlier this year, had forced them to search for other investment activities that would keep them financially viable.

Insurance companies are free to invest in a government security of any tenor, whether these are domestically issued or foreign-currency denominated.

But Alcid said they find it difficult to get approval from the Insurance Commission to invest in alternative financial instruments like corporate bonds, equities, sovereign bonds issued by foreign governments, and sophisticated financial products.

He said members of the insurance industry want to be as flexible as banks in making investment decisions.

Although banks are regulated by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, Alcid said, they are able to get approval of their investment plans more easily than insurance firms.

The Philippine Life Insurance Association, which counts the biggest industry players as members, earlier said it was advocating for the amendment of the Insurance Code in such a way that insurance firms would be given flexibility in making investment decisions.

"As far as investment sophistication is concerned, we (insurance firms) lag significantly behind banks," Alcid said.

He said the insurance industry believes the low interest rate environment was likely to stay, with the country's economy expected to meet the government's growth targets.

Given this, he said, it is a must for their industry to be more aggressive in searching for alternative investments.

"If there would be no major disruptions to be caused by the recent elections, then there is no reason for this economy to go back to where it was a few years ago," he said.

"Economic fundamentals are strong and we may see the Philippine market to outperform the others. And so, we must find other investment outlets." *Michelle V. Remo*

High system losses hound Bicol, Mindanao power co-ops

By Abigail L. Ho

PROVINCIAL POWER DISTRIBUTORS, particularly those in the Mindanao grid and the Bicol Region, continue to suffer the effects of inefficient operations by way of extremely high system losses.

Edita Bueno of the National Electrification Administration, said electric cooperatives serving Lanao del Sur suffer from system losses of as high as 52 percent.

This means that more than half of the electricity that they distribute gets lost along the way, either due to technical reasons or pilferage.

In Sulu, Bueno said system losses reach as high as 40 percent. Bicol electric cooperatives, although better off, still registered system losses of more than 20 percent. Most cooperatives in the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao have system losses ranging from 17-20 percent.

Electric cooperatives can only pass on as an additional charge to its customers up to 14.5 percent of its system losses. Anything beyond that, they have to absorb.

"Bicol and the ARMM are really the problematic areas," Bueno said. "Bicol is always being hit by typhoons, and that doesn't help."

According to the latest status report on the implementation of RA 9136 or the Electric Power Industry Reform Act of 2001, there are technical programs and activities that are being carried out right now to enhance the operational efficiency of the electric cooperatives.

One such program is the System Loss Reduction through Area Engineering Concept, a shared management approach wherein the electric cooperatives' coverage area is sub-divided into different area offices.

Local steel users question Global Steel's capacity

By Ronnel W. Domingo

A GROUP OF GALVANIZERS HAS ASKED THE government to hold the grant of incentives to Global Steel Philippines Inc., claiming that the company is not yet commercially operational as earlier announced.

In a May 17 letter to Trade Secretary Peter B. Favila, the Filipino Galvanizers Institute Inc. also said questions about GSPI business practices abounded even in neighboring countries.

FGII president Salvio D. Perez said the Vietnam Steel Association (VSA) had "discovered GSPI's fraudulent export of cold-rolled coils to Vietnam using alleged forged and fake documents."

According to industry publication Metal Bulletin, which FGII cited in its letter, the Vietnamese government revoked last March GSPI's zero-tariff privileges following the discovery of the spurious documents late last year.

Under trade agreements in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations where the Philippines and Vietnam are members, cross-border shipments of goods are duty-free provided that the products contain at least 40-percent input from within the region.

Data from Vietnamese customs showed that GSPI sent in 41,733 tons of CRCs worth $24 million between November 2005 and April 2006.

VSA alleged that GSPI could not have met the Asean's 40-percent rule since it only started producing hot rolled coils in April 2006, and only on a trial basis.

Global Steel denies the charges, saying documents for cargoes were inspected and approved by port officials in Iligan City, site of its facilities.

VCO
PHILIPPINES

TURNING COCONUTS INTO GOLD At the International Food Exhibition (IFEX) trade fair in Pasay City, VCO Philippines association president Tess Santos (center) and marketing consultant Girlie Sarmiento discuss virgin coconut oil's entry into the $80-billion global wellness market with a visiting product developer from Australia. The Philippines is currently exporting about 500 metric tons annually at an average price of $3.80 per liter. Philippine International Trading Corp. (PITC) has agreed to push the country's health oil product in non-traditional markets like China and South Africa.

SBMA eyes maritime park for RP shipbuilders

By Riza T. Olchondra

THE SUBIC BAY METROPOLITAN AUthority (SBMA) plans to build a 50-hectare facility and offer tax incentives to local shipping firms, in line with the government's development plan for the local shipping industry.

Among the incentives the SBMA is contemplating to help local shipbuilders are affordable rental schemes, tax and duty-free importation bundled with a 5-percent corporate tax on gross income, unrestricted entry of foreign investments, no foreign exchange control, and four-to-five-year income tax holidays for qualified investors.

SBMA Chair Feliciano G. Salonga said the local shipbuilding center would be part of a larger facility to be called the Subic Bay Maritime Industrial Park. A feasibility study for the facility, which may take two to three years to build, is currently being undertaken.

Aside from the maritime park, locators can also use the SBMA's existing logistic facilities and systems for storage, loading and unloading, packaging, processing and information, and transportation.

SBMA will also make use of the so-called Synchrolift system that will allow the raising and lowering of vessels in and out of the water for dry-docking. Use of the existing system will be offered for short- and long-term rental with low-cost terms.

For local shipyard operators, such as those belonging to the Metro Manila Shipyard Association Inc. (MMSAI), this is welcome news. The group has announced that it is considering opening an expansion site at the freeport zone to accommodate the growing demand for new ships.

"Shipyards in Navotas have reached their limit and have no more room for expansion, particularly on plans to increase capacity in both shipbuilding and ship repair to cater to the growing demand," said Edison Sy of Asian Slipways Corp. and current MMSAI president.

The group also said it would closely coordinate with the National Maritime Leasing Corp., a subsidiary of the National Development Corp. mandated to help local operators acquire affordable and more efficient cargo and passenger ships and fishing vessels.

BSP eases rules for agri . . .

From page B1

potential market.

The "unserved" market was coming from:

- 96.7 percent of total enterprises in the country which are microenterprises;
- Filipinos in the bottom 30 percent of the population who manage at least two microenterprise activities, and
- 4.1 million families who belong to the lowest income strata who are engaged in micro businesses.

Based on BSP documents, Tetangco said there were now 223 thrift, rural and cooperative rural banks with microfinance operations with a total of 550 branches. Before the BSP actively advocated microfinance in 2000, he said there were only 45 microfinance-oriented banks.

Outside the banking system, there were about 4,000 savings and credit cooperatives and about 50 serious microfinance lenders who subscribe to best practices and standards.

Among non-government organizations, he noted that there were about 300 microfinance NGOs, of which 30 have sizeable microfinance programs with a loan portfolio of P3.7 billion and more than 500 branches nationwide.

As part of a national strategy on microfinance, the BSP lifted the branching moratorium for microfinance-oriented banks in 2001.

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HP aims to get market away from ink refillers

By Charles E. Buban

THE INK REFILLING BUSINESS IS THRIVING worldwide because consumers are looking for a cheaper alternative to branded cartridges.

But this could soon change as Hewlett-Packard, the world's largest manufacturer of printers, announced last week the expansion of its supplies portfolio in the Asia Pacific and Japan region to include more affordable ink cartridges.

"For more than 25 years, our customers only had the option of using one type of cartridge for a particular HP printer model. Now, customers will have a variety of options," said John Solomon, HP Asia Pacific and Japan VP for supplies during the company's (Image and Printing Group) Print Watch Live! event held in Singapore.

HP's Don Tan shows off the professional-quality and long-lasting output of the HP Vivera inks.

Critical

Under the "One Size Does Not Fit All" campaign, HP devised a color coding system to help customers select the right type of ink, as well as the cheapest for the job.

The cartridges packaged in blue are designed for customers who print just a few pages a week or a month.

Also included under the blue color code are HP's Simple Black print cartridges that are suited for non-critical everyday printing (like copies of e-mails copies, online transaction receipts and online articles).

Cost savings and high yields

On the other hand, the green line or HP's value inkjet print cartridges target customers who print in large volumes.

Under this category, HP will include its new high capacity XL inkjet print cartridges that promise customers up to 40 percent cost savings or three times more prints than the competition.

"This value category also includes all existing twin packs, multi-packs and photo value packs. Customers who already use these value offerings can find these items more easily in their new green packaging," informed Jun Juntilla, HP Asia Pacific and Japan supplies business manager.

Best output

Bearing the red color code are HP's specialty inkjet print cartridges, which are ideal for customers who print photographs and demand exceptional quality.

Included under this category are the new HP Vivera+ cartridges that work on HP's older range of printers while providing the company's latest color ink technology.

"By employing this color coding system in the packaging as well as the different options available under each color group, our customers will be able to choose the cartridge that best suits their own budgets and values," said Francis Warren Chua, HP Philippines Imaging and Printing Group marketing communications manager.

Solomon said HP's move to introduce more products was prompted by the company's desire to give more value to customers who often end up spending more because the refilled cartridges they buy quickly run out of ink, or damage the printer.

Phone puts on extra wallop sans the bulk

By Riza T. Olchondra

THE SMOOTH-SLIDING NOKIA E65 is one attractive smartphone that exhibits a lot more style than the first generation of E-series devices.

The E65, for instance, is one of the smallest in its class at 105x49x15.5mm, which is just slightly longer than a calling card.

It weighs just 115 grams, with rounded edges and easy-to-grip, leather-like materials that make it a joy to hold.

It has a lot of buttons, though, which take some getting used to.

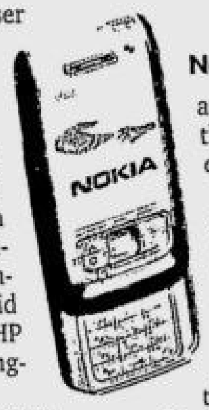
There are 11 upfront: the usual navigator key, four control keys, plus a one-touch key each for Conference, Contacts, My Own, Mute, Menu, and Backspace. There are 12 on the keypad when the phone is spread, and there are four on the side for recording.

On the plus side, the user can access basic commands with just one touch of a button - once they are all figured out.

Experimenting with one-touch buttons shows market sensitivity on Nokia's side, since the feature is becoming more important to consumers, said analysts at the recent HP Mobility Summit in Shanghai.

Buttons also access features for reading text messages aloud and setting Voice Controls, which can be accessed by holding down the record button on the side of the device.

All in all, the small-sized buttons and voice commands indicate that the E65 is mainly a "voice device."



Nokia E65

For audiophiles, the speaker is strong enough and the bundled mono headset is okay, but being built to accommodate stereo headsets would have made the package more user-friendly.

Multimedia is well covered, though, with the the Real Player, Music Player, the Camera application and Gallery. And the 240x320 pixels screen is good for Internet surfing and picture viewing.

As for files, the phone has a big memory capable of running Flash programs and games.

One notable factor is that the erstwhile add-on program—Quick Office—is already built-in, enabling E65 users to use all MS Office documents, Word, Excel and PowerPoint, among others.

PDF (Adobe) documents, a Zip Manager (Epocware) and the Search, Teams and WiFi (wizard) utilities are also standard.

The phone does not have a QWERTY keyboard—which is a trade-off for all small phones—so reading and making short replies are easier to do than actually composing documents.

The phone offers many choices for connectivity, with quad-band EGSM, Wap, WCDMA (3G), WiFi (great for voice over the Internet calls), USB 2.0, IrDA and Bluetooth 1.2 all supported.

It also has a GPS (Global Positioning System) locator, which can be very useful when travelling abroad, since GPS is not readily available here.

Push email is also well supported, from Intellisync (Nokia), Blackberry Connect (Blackberry), Exchange (Microsoft) and such.

However, there is no front facing camera for video calls. That means the WCDMA use will be limited to data transfers.

Still, the camera's two-megapixel resolution is sharp enough for picture-taking and Internet posting. There is a self-timer, but there is no flash LED or auto focus.

For business users and general consumers that want extra features without the bulk, the E65 is a worthy choice.

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OBITUARIES

Our Dearly Beloved Mama

DELIA RAMOS JIMEMEZ

*Peacefully joined our Lord & her husband **Benjamin** on May 13, 2007 at the age of 66.*

Her children Bendie & Emily, Debie & Reggie Fabian, Bendel & Grace, her mother, Inay Pinay, brothers & sisters, Bayani, Amor, Lino, Caridad, Manolo, Eden, Marilyn; grandchildren Bianco, Benjo, Binnie, Francis, Catherine, Kristine request your prayers for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at Chapels 1-2 Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina City to be transferred to San Luis, Batangas on May 23, 2007 for final interment on May 26, 2007 at 1:30 P.M.

Lovingly Remembered
on his 6th Death Anniversary

JOSE MANUEL VILLANUEVA

October 15, 1953 – May 21, 2001

Mt. Carmel Church, New Manila, Q.C.	6 AM, 7 AM & 6:00 PM
St. Joseph's Convent of Perpetual Adoration (Pink Sisters)	6:00 AM
Carmel of St. Therese, Gilmore, Q.C.	6:30 AM
Immaculate Conception, Cubao, Q.C.	7:00 AM
Ledesma Hall, Makati Medical Center	7:30 AM
Santuario de San Jose, Greenhills, Q.C.	8:00 AM
Christ the King Parish, Green Meadows, Q.C.	6:00 PM
Saint Martin, Sunnyvale, CA, USA	7:30 AM
Saint Martin of Tours, Brentwood, Los Angeles, CA, USA	8:00 AM
Saint Joseph, Mountain View, CA, USA	8:00 AM

His family requests the pious readers to pray for the repose of his soul.

JAIME HARRIS INOCENCIO

Peacefully joined our Lord on May 19, 2007 at the age of 72.

His loving wife **LETTY SULIT**, children **JASON, JERIC**, daughter-in-law **JESSICA**, grandchildren **ANYA & PAIGE**, brothers, sisters, in-laws, all relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at the Santuario de San Jose in Greenhills East, Mandaluyong City.

Interment will be announced later.

OBITUARIES

Our Dearly Beloved

Mrs. Florafina Campos Pe Benito

of Paoay, Ilocos Norte - Quezon City
July 16, 1922 - May 19, 2007

"...a wife, a mother, an educator"

> *"I know that my Saviour lives and at the end He will stand on this earth. My flesh may be destroyed, yet from this body I will see God. Yes, I will see Him for myself, and I long for that moment."*
>
> *Job 19:25-27*

Her bereaved husband, **Atty. Pacifico Dulay Pe Benito**, son **Chito**, daughter **Grace** and husband **Jojo Degollado**, her grandchildren **Jennica**, **Anjo** and **Trisha**, living brothers **Feding** and wife **Geling**, **Pepito** and wife **Patsy**, other relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her body lies in state at the Sanctuarium, Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Interment will be on Wednesday, May 23, 2007 at the Himlayang Pilipino Memorial Park in Tandang Sora, Quezon City after the 9:0 0a.m. Mass at Chapel Freesia.

BENITO "BENET" S. VICENTE

(March 21, 1922 – May 18, 2007)

Beloved father, good friend and a great horse trainer
Peacefully joined our Creator at the age of 85.

His loving wife **LINA**; children **VIC, BOY & NATY, JAIME & OPEL, AIDA & ABET, BONG & PEPE, JERRY & BABY, CALOY & EVE, ED, ORLY & BEC, TONY & JANET** and last but not the least **ANGIE & JOVY**; together with his grandchildren & relatives request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at Arlington Memorial Chapels, G. Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Interment will be on May 24, 2007 at 10:00 a.m. at North Cemetery, Manila. There will be a Mass on Wednesday, May 23, 2007 after the sunset at Arlington.

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Customs taps nontraditional revenue sources

By Michelle V. Remo

THE BUREAU OF CUSTOMS said it would run after the liabilities of exporters who operate customs bonded warehouses and, in the process, generate P3 billion in additional revenue for the government.

Customs Deputy Commissioner Rey Umali said the bureau had started to tap nontraditional sources of revenues to ensure it would meet its collection targets.

He said there were many CBWs that have past due liabilities with the BOC, and the government agency would intensify its efforts to collect from them.

A CBW is a place where duty-free imported raw materials and intermediate goods that are used as inputs for export products are stored. Exporters operating the warehouses are required to transform at least 70 percent of the imported goods into export products. If exporters failed to meet this requirement and used the imported materials to produce products sold domestically, they are required to pay the appropriate duties to the BOC.

Based on the latest BOC estimates, Umali said collecting the collection of the past due liabilities of the warehouses could yield P2 billion in additional revenue for the government.

Customs Commissioner Napoleon Morales said his office also issued a memorandum order that would require CBW operators to pay 100 percent of their liabilities due for every payment period.

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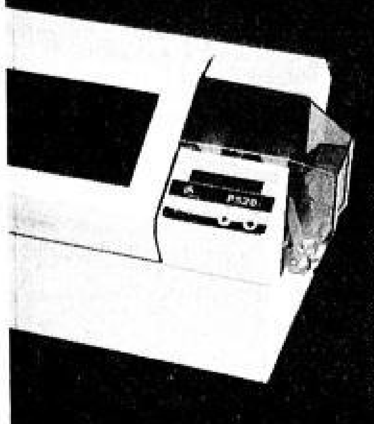

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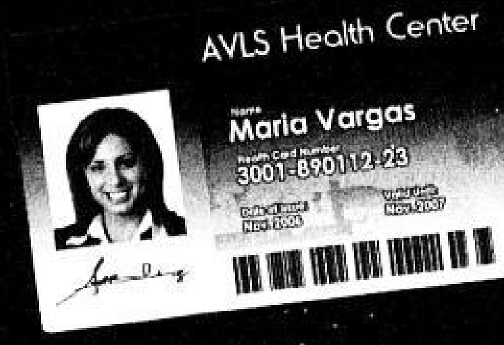

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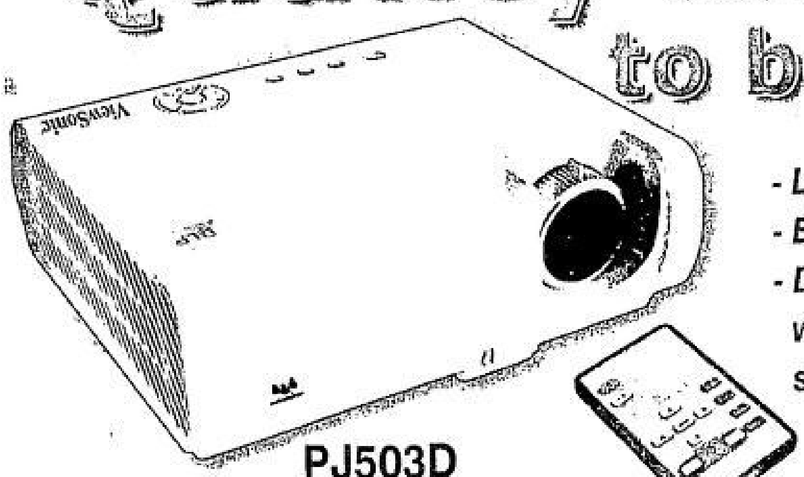

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Math wiz also has a green thumb

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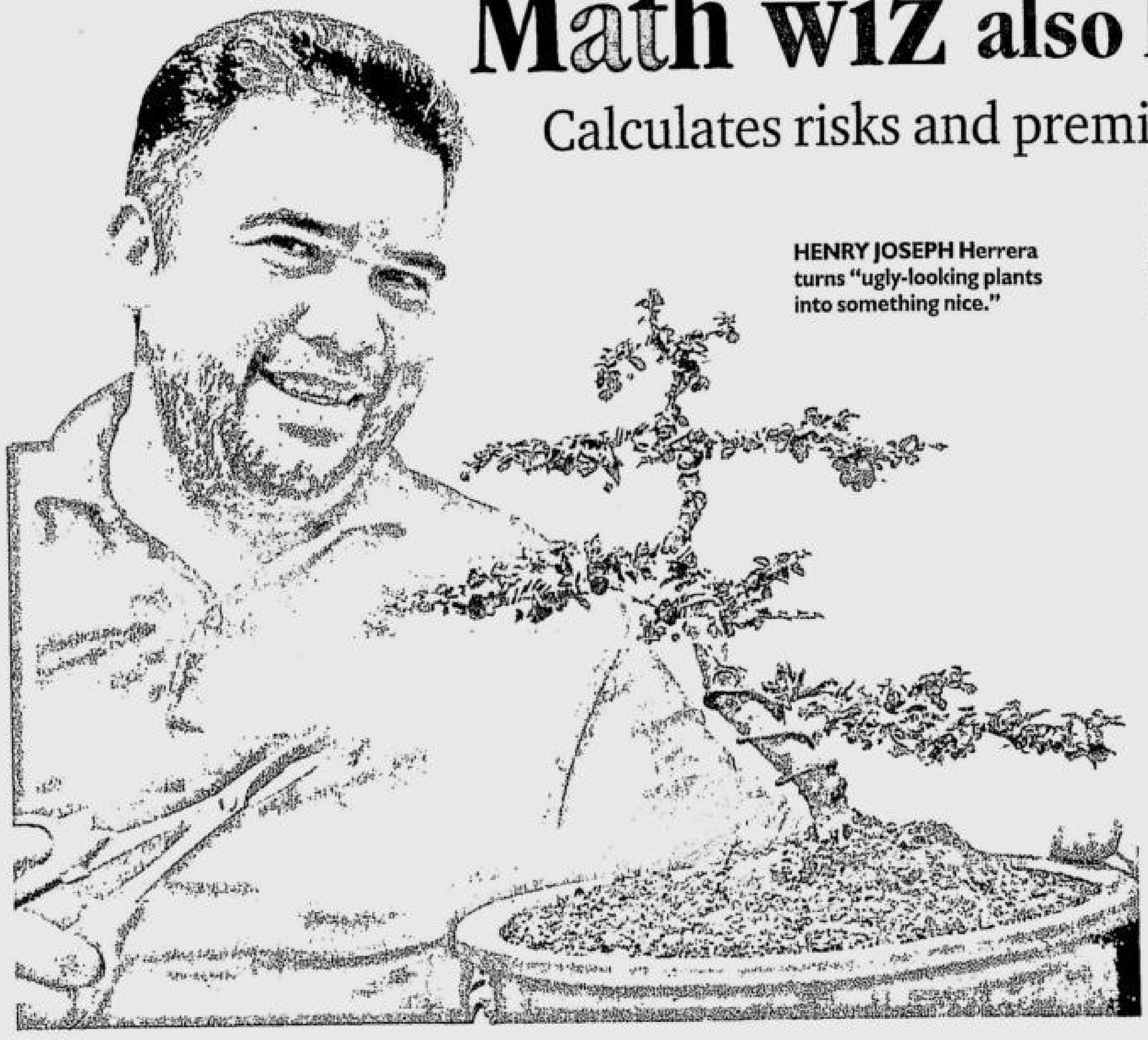


HENRY JOSEPH Herrera turns "ugly-looking plants into something nice."

By Doris C. Dumlao

MATH WIZARD HENRY JOSEPH HERRERA has devoted the last 27 years of his life calculating insurance risks and premiums and making people's money work harder for them.

As the new CEO of SunLife Finance Philippines, Herrera is tasked to lead this company towards its "1-1-1" vision/mission—to be the number one in all its three business lines—life insurance, asset management and pre-need—by 2010.

He has big shoes to fill, taking over the void left by Lorenzo Tan, the architect of Philippine National Bank's turnaround who recently returned to the banking arena as CEO of Rizal Commercial Banking Corp. But Herrera himself is fiercely competitive and determined to attain SLFP's triple goal in three years.

To date, SLFP is the country's second biggest player in life insurance. It recently achieved the number one ranking in one measure in pre-need: Initial cash brought in. In mutual funds, it currently ranks number three.

Long before Herrera became a top actuarian, he was a professional athlete. This BS Statistics cum laude graduate from UP Diliman, who finished a masters degree in Math and MBA also from the country's premier state university, once played for the Philippine sepak takraw national team and competed during the 1997 Southeast Asian games in Kuala Lumpur.

Inspired by an elder brother who was a national sepak takraw champion, he joined the sepak varsity team in UP at 16 and thereafter represented the country in various competitions.

Sepak takraw wasn't the only sport he got hooked into. His first love was tennis, which he played since grade school and for which he won tournaments here and there. "Nothing big," he says, but this racquet sport would keep him in good company in the next three decades.

In recent years, Herrera has shifted to badminton because it's a sport he could play with his children. The kids have stopped hitting shuttlecocks but he has continued to play what's now the country's most favored sport. He's part of a smashers' group in Marikina.

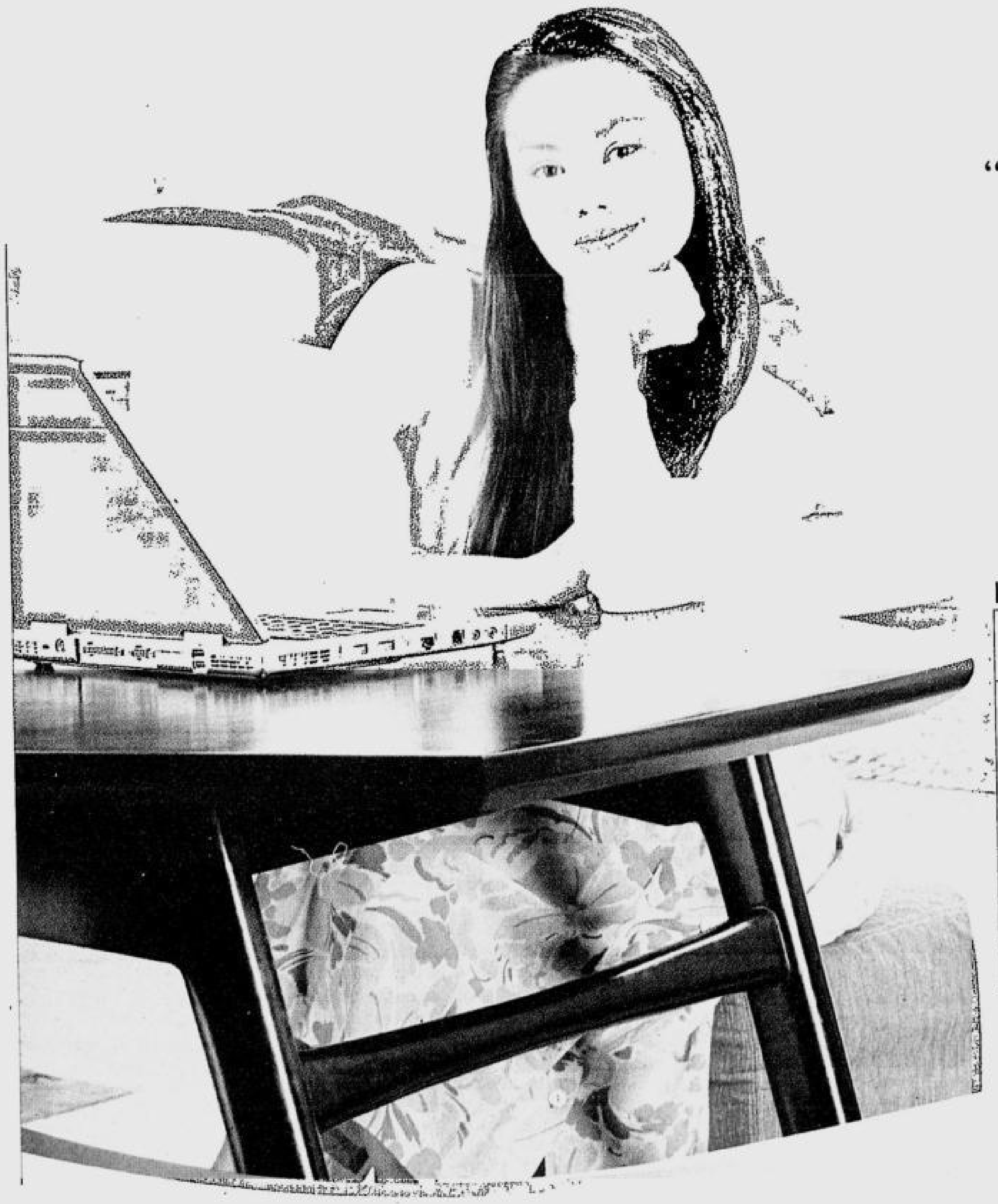
"I might be on the heavy side but I used to run 40 kilometers a week. I then played tennis for 30 years, so it has enabled me to keep up with the younger guys I play with," Herrera says.

Passion for gardening

Aside from his natural affinity to numbers and athletics, Herrera is blessed with a green thumb. He tends bonsai plants while his wife Maya grows herbs in the backyard.

"It relieves stress—waking up, watering my plants, before sleeping, watering my plants,

MATH WIZ/ B2-2



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Investment Fund Performance as of April 30, 2007

Investment Funds	Fund Classification	Net Yield		
		2 - Year Return*	Full Year	
			2006	2005
PESO FUNDS				
Metrofund Starter	Money Market	20.47%	10.80%	7.63%
Metrofund Elite	Bond-Intermediate Term	25.61%	13.70%	10.23%
Metrofund Peak Earner	Bond-Medium Term	22.43%	13.74%	8.42%
Metro Invest Plus	Bond-Intermediate Term	22.66%	12.69%	8.25%
Metro Capital Growth Fund	Balanced Fund	69.71%	41.24%	13.75%
DOLLAR FUNDS				
Metrodollar Phil. Liquid Fund	Bond-Intermediate Term	14.84%	7.06%	5.74%
Metrodollar Phil. Bond Fund	Bond-Medium Term	21.66%	9.69%	9.17%
Metro Dollar Asian Bond Fund	Bond-Medium Term	6.91%	4.27%	0.99%

* Cumulative net return from April 2005 to April 30, 2007.

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What a solar dryer can do to farmers' lives

FARMERS used to dry their corn on a basketball court

ZAMBOANGA—SIBUGAY-HISSAN BASSO, 38, has been a farmer all his life, and his sun-burned skin is a testament to the many years he has spent tilling the land left to him by his parents. Although farming is backbreaking work, it gives him hope and a sense of purpose knowing that his efforts would be rewarded at harvest time.

Farming is the common thread that binds together the lives of Brgy. Datu Tumangong's residents. During a good harvest, everyone rejoices, as families prepare lavish meals akin to a town fiesta. During a poor cropping season, farmers share their limited resources to help each other survive until the next planting season.

Basso knows that planting crops and selling crops are two very different enterprises. While farming may be the more difficult part of the undertaking, negotiating a good price for his produce also presented more difficult challenges because traders from the Poblacion often dictate the buying price of the palay and corn grown by farmers in the community. Since the quality of the grains is usually inferior because farmers lack an adequate drying facility, prices are typically low.

Basso and his confreres have often been forced to utilize fishnets laid on the ground or the town's basketball court as makeshift dryers. However, insufficiently dried corn or palay have a higher-than-desirable moisture content, which makes the grains rot easily. Thus, farmers must sell to traders at very low farm-gate prices.

"We were at a disadvantage, as traders decided how much they would pay for grains. They bought our corn for as low as P6 to P7 per kilo and palay at P10 per kilo," relates Basso in Filipino.

Moreover, he says that only a limited amount of grain could be dried at the basketball court at one time, leaving other farmers to wait for several days or even weeks for their turn to dry their crops.

As a result, sacks of undried corn rotted by the roadside, leaving farmers like Basso with huge post-harvest loses.

"A lot of farmers decided to stop farming because they knew that their grains would just go to waste.," he recounts.

This situation improved dramatically with the construction of two concrete solar dryers built by USAID's Growth with Equity Mindanao (GEM) Program, in conjunction with the local government.

The post-harvest facilities are among 815 Barangay Infrastructure Projects-which include water systems, grains warehouses, foot bridges, trading centers, farm-to-market roads and boat landings being constructed by GEM in collaboration with local governments, throughout conflict-affected areas in Mindanao.

After the solar dryers were built, farmers no longer had to wait for days to dry their grains.

With the two 10x20 meter pavement-type solar dryers, 40 cavans or sacks of palay could be dried at any one time.

The Datu Tumangong Farmers' Association, which manages the facility, devised a scheduling scheme to accommodate all farmers from the barangay's seven sitios during the same week.

The scheme has resulted in a more systematic post-production cycle, which has not only eliminated tensions among farmers but has also created a stronger sense of camaraderie.

Edwina Desoasida, Tungawan Municipal Planning Development Coordinator, says that the solar dryers have been a boon to farmers in the area, who are now experiencing increased productivity levels, and consequently, enjoying better incomes.

"This project has helped our farmers a lot because all of them can now dry their grains properly. Also, you no longer see sacks of rotting corn by the roadside," explains Desoasida in Filipino.

She says that, farmers can now demand better prices due to the improved quality of the grains.

The average buying price of corn in the area is now P9 per kilo, while palay sells at P12 to 14 per kilo.

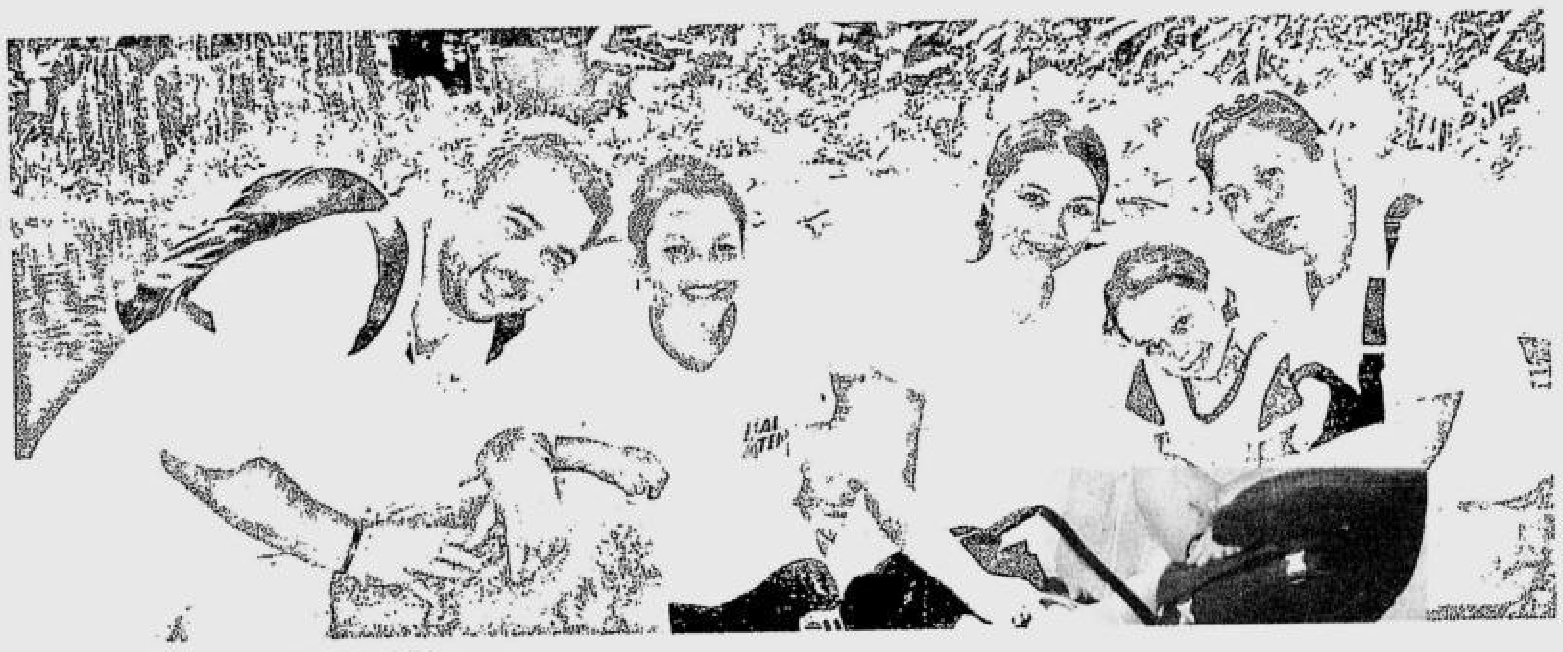
Traders are also pleased because Tumangong's farmers are able to regularly meet their volume requirements.

According to Desoaside, the farmers' association charges its member-farmers a minimum fee of P1.50 for every sack of corn or palay dried using the facility.

The proceeds generated are used by the organization for the maintenance of the facility and to provide small loans to its members.

Basso is grateful to USAID and GEM for the assistance they have provided to his community.

He says that due to his improved income, he is now able to provide for the basic needs of his family and to send all of his children to school. (GEM Program)



HENRY and wife Maya with their children

Math wiz also has a green thumb

From page B2-1

then on weekends wiring them," he says.

His passion for gardening goes a long way back.

"In the song 'Bahay Kubo' (Nipa Hut), during those years of the Green Revolution (a project of then First Lady Imelda Marcos which made seeds available to the public), we planted in our backyard, small as it is, all the vegetables in that song," he recounts.

Nowadays, this bonsai aficionado tends to about 50 of these prized plants at home. He's part of a UP-based group that reveres bonsai-making as an art form, but he regards himself as a neophyte in this field.

"We bring bonsai materials and have a workshop every week. I call them the Picazzos and Vincent Van Goghs of bonsai. They can turn ugly-looking plants into something nice," he says.

Herrera buys bonsai materials that were hunted and uprooted from the forests and grows them. The plants simply need water and weekly fertilizers.

"The most thrilling experience is when you see leaves growing after two to three weeks. After that, you try to wire it, then if you change your mind, cut here or there and form whatever you like," he says.

In the backyard, his wife Maya grows herbs like parsley, rosemary and basil.

Herrera is also a devout dad to three gifted children and is married to a fellow statistical genius. They were among the first husband-and-wife actuary team in the Philippines.

Mensa family

Taking after their parents, the two eldest children are now members of Mensa, an international organization founded in England in 1945 for the intellectual elite.

The youngest, Samantha, is not old enough to take the exam to qualify for Mensa membership but is a budding ballerina mentored by Shirley Cruz Halili.

After winning top honors in an international ballet competition in Singapore, the family recently flew to California to accompany Sam, who's in grade 5 at St. Paul, to a ballet performance in Disneyland. The second child Kevin, a junior high school student from Ateneo is a math wizard like his parents. The eldest, Tinka is taking up BS economics in UP.

Herrera's insurance career started in 1980 with the largest Filipino-owned insurer Insular Life. He then joined Lincoln Life (which became CMG and was eventually absorbed by Manulife) and Cocolife later on. Before joining SLFP, he was president of a small insurance company owned by the Knights of Columbus.

Career path

It was when he took up his MBA in UP that his interest shifted to finance and investments, after which his career as chief investment officer of SLFP began to shape up.

Asked what he thinks is the most challenging part of being SLFP's new CEO, he says it's really to grow the asset management side of the business – especially since this company has beefed up its business from a mere insurer of risks to a key provider of wealth management products.

When he was put in charge of SLFP's asset management business in December 2004, sales were hitting only P76 million and he was tasked to boost the sales level to P3 billion.

"That was my first challenge as CEO of the asset management side. We made P2.9 billion in the first year; the following year (we've made) P5.9 billion, we've grown 83 percent, then 102 percent (the year after)," he notes.

In the first quarter if this year, SLFP's mutual fund sales have reached P3 billion.

"Brick by brick, we had to strengthen the foundation that will hopefully make us the largest and most admired in asset management in the Philippines," Herrera says.

"We're getting there. We started in 2000, with only three funds at P50 million each. We now manage close to P14 billion of assets in our mutual funds and our return has been very good to our clients," he says.

SLFP offers an array of wealth management services tailor-fit to clients' risk appetite—ranging from the ultraconservative to the daredevil investor.

"There is no single solution for everyone. We take into account customers' preference, tolerance to risk and investment horizon. We're probably the only company that asks clients more than 20 questions, to make sure that the products suit them. We try to understand them better," he says.

SLFP's sales of pre-need products have likewise rebounded from the industry-wide slump induced by the collapse of two large players CAP (College Assurance Plan) and Pacific Plans.

"We've been here for over 100 years, survived World Wars, so we started a campaign where we packaged a consumer product and a financial product, which brought tremendous success... From less than 4 percent market share in 2004, we now have 31 percent market share in terms of RCPI at end-2006 to take the leadership in that measurement," Herrera says.

SLFP's main strength is a strong agency force that has enabled it to cross-sell various products from its three business lines—insurance, mutual funds and pre-need, Herrera says.

"We may not have the 9,000-agency force that our main competitor in the life insurance business has. We only have 2,300, but in terms of quality, that's where we are differentiated from rest of the industry," he says.

He believes his company has so far only touched the "tip of the iceberg" as far as market potential is concerned.

"We have over 300,000 policyholders on the life side. We have only a little over 13,000 (clients) in mutual funds and about 33,000 in pre-need, so there's a lot of cross-selling opportunities even within the existing client base of Sun Life," he says.

In the future, Herrera says SLFP will consider selling products through new channels, such as bancassurance or the selling of insurance products through banks.

"We've seen in the region how bancassurance has translated to growth in sales. That's what we'll continue working on. We haven't stopped looking for partners," he says.

In terms of market segmentation, SLFP has carved a strong business for its life insurance within the upscale market but it's targeting the broader market for its pre-need and especially for the booming mutual fund business.

"We truly believe in the vision for Filipinos to have financial freedom. Empowering even the smallest saver and trying to covert them from savers into investors is a key role that we see in asset management," he says.

MAP CEO Academy

MAPping THE FUTURE

By Albert T. Villadolid

FOR CHIEF EXECUTIVES WHO would like to be more literate in computer and information and communication technology, the Management Association of the Philippines (MAP) is conducting a series of courses under the auspices of the MAP CEO Academy.

Organized by the ICT Committee of MAP headed by Helen P. Macasaet, and under the guidance of Cesar V. Purisima, governor-in-charge of the MAP ICT Committee, the ICT executive sessions will cater to different levels of participants, ranging from those with basic skills up to those with advanced skills.

These executive sessions are jointly sponsored by Amadeus, the world's largest global distribution system provider; Smart, the leading wireless telecommunications company in the Philippines; Pentathlon Systems Resources Inc., and STI.

These course offerings are part of the many exciting offerings of the MAP CEO Academy.

Recently, the MAP Board of Governors institutionalized the MAP CEO Academy as its umbrella brand for all learning sessions for its members.

The Academy has been designated as the venue for the continuing education of MAP members and the sharing of best practices, latest trends and technologies, and information and knowledge on management and leadership topics.

Some of the recent offerings of the Academy were on strategic management, best practices and trends in corporate governance in East Asia, and executive wellness sessions.

The first ICT executive session, the foundation or basic level, will be held this coming June 1, 2007.

This basic session will introduce participants to the use of computers and the Internet. It will focus on basic PC operations, e-mail messaging and collaboration, Internet navigation, basic terms, and basic office software usage.

The second level, the Intermediate Level, is scheduled on July 6, 2007.

This higher level session is intended for MAP members and guests who already have basic skills in ICT and popular software tools but want to learn new features, functions and tools in office and business automation. Focus will be on office productivity tools, chat tools, web browsing and power tools like executive bookmarks. ICT security matters will also be covered. This session will also cover and give participants an overview on popular and useful software applications used in general business processes.

Finally, the Level 3 ICT Executive Session, the Advanced Level, scheduled on July 27, 2007, is for MAP members and guests who really want to familiarize themselves with the state-of-the art technologies available for business executives today.

A specific area of focus will be the use of mobile gadgets, wireless technologies, hardware and software interfaces, data synchronization and executive mobility. More advanced ICT security matters and business continuity topics will also be covered.

All these executive sessions will be held at the Amadeus Corporate University training center located at the 36/F of LKG Tower, Ayala Avenue. The center comes fully equipped with state-of-the-art training facilities and broadband and wireless Internet connections, and is primarily used by the travel trade industry in the Philippines.

Because most businesses today rely extensively on ICT tools, managers and executives are challenged and tasked to keep themselves up to date on these new technologies.

The MAP ICT Executive Sessions are designed to help them keep pace with these technologies. MAP members interested to attend and take advantage of these exciting executive sessions should contact the MAP Secretariat at (632) 751-1149, or via fax no. 751-1154 or via email at mapsec@globenet.com.ph.

(Albert T. Villadolid is vice chair of the ICT Committee of the Management Association of the Philippines and is the general manager of Amadeus Philippines Inc. Amadeus is the world's largest and leading global distribution system serving more than 500 airlines and 70,000 travel agencies in 217 markets, with more than 360,000 Amadeus terminals deployed worldwide. He can be reached at avilladolid@amadeusph.com.)

Taipan Sy to get a doctoral degree

PRESENTATION of the University of Guam resolution to Henry Sy Sr.(2nd from right) by President Harold Allen as Cynthia Henson (2nd from left) and Felicidad Sy look on. RUDY ESPERAS

SM FOUNDER AND CHAIR HENRY Sy Sr. was recently honored by the University of Guam at a dinner reception at the Makati Shangri-La Hotel to announce the intent of the The Board of Regents of UOG and the Board of Directors of the Endowment Foundation to confer Sy with an Honorary Degree of Doctor of Business Management (Honoris Causa). The actual conferral exercise will be held in Guam on the 27th of May 2007.

The doctoral degree was given in honor of Sy's philantrophic efforts in Guam, where 25 to 30 percent of the population are of Filipino descent. Sy has been a firm advocate of education. His contributions to Guam either through business or through education have been directed toward making Guam a better place.

No less than the members of the Board of Regents of the University of Guam and the Board of Directors of the Endowment Foundation came to the Philippines to hold a ceremony in honor of Sy. The delegates were headed by foundation director Thomas Calvo, board of regents treasurer Cynthia Henson, and UOG president Harold Allen.

The University of Guam is a major institution of higher education in the Western Pacific. It is a land grant institution accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges. Its history dates back to June 1952 when the island established the Territorial College of Guam as a two-year training school under the Department of Education. The college, located on a high school campus in Mongmong, had an initial enrollment of about 200 students.

Today, the university has more than 2,000 alumni, and currently 3,000 students are taking baccalaureate degrees in 35 different areas and graduate degrees in 12 different areas. It supports the College of Natural and Applied Sciences, College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences, the College of Professional Studies and the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. During their visit, the delegates of the UOG and the Endowment Foundation held bilateral talks to encourage partnership between the Philippines and Guam in the areas of education and tourism.

Sy first traveled to the island in the 1960s, initially investing in the Guam Hilton Hotel. In 1988, he invested in the Agana Shopping Center, and has been committed to the joint efforts of the local government and private sector the revitalize the capital city. He was awarded the prestigious Governor's Award naming him ambassador at large by Guam Gov. Felix Camacho last year.

MOVEMENT

Etihad appoints new EVP

ETIHAD AIRWAYS, THE UAE'S NATIONAL AIRline, has appointed Des Vertannes as its new executive vice president for cargo.

Vertannes said: "It is a privilege to be joining Etihad at such an exciting time in the airline's history. Crystal Cargo has grown considerably since being created in 2004, and I am relishing the opportunity of working with its talented team and expanding the division further."

Prior to joining at Gulf Air, Vertannes was chief executive at the UK-based Air-Menzies Cargo World.

James Hogan, Etihad's chief executive added: "It is great to be welcoming Des to Etihad and I look forward to working closely with him in his new role. He has a wealth of experience in the cargo industry which will be crucial in the development of Etihad Crystal Group."

Currently, Etihad offers flights to 41 destinations in the Middle East, Europe, North America, Africa and Asia, including the Philippines. All flights offer excellent connectivity with Etihad's services. Etihad flies nonstop to and from Manila four times a week (Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday).

Metrobank elects new board member

METROPOLITAN Bank & Trust Co. (Metrobank), the country's leading bank in total resources, has elected Edmund A. Go as a new member of its board of directors during its annual stockholder's meeting on May 2, 2007.

Go served as the senior executive vice president and head of the bank's treasury group. He joined Metrobank in 2001 and is chair for Orix Metro Leasing and Finance Corporation and Metropolitan Bank (Bahamas) Ltd.; and director of First Metro International Co., Ltd. (Hong Kong).

A graduate of San Beda College with a degree in B.S. Commerce (Accounting) cum laude, Go previously held key positions in Solidbank Corporation, Citibank-Global Private Bank, Citibank Private Bank (US), Citicorp Securities Inc., Citibank Private Bank (Hong Kong) and Citibank N.A. (Taiwan).

GOINGS-ON

Gokongwei Foundation opens China scholarship program

JG SUMMIT HOLDINGS INC. (JGSHI) FOUNDER John Gokongwei Jr. announced recently that the Gokongwei Brothers Foundation (GBF) is sponsoring a one-year scholarship program for talented young professionals and college graduates to study, all expenses paid, in Beijing, China.

The Gokongwei Brothers Foundation China Scholarship Program is similar to the early 20th century "*pensionado*" program of the US government of sending outstanding young students of the Philippines to study in the United States. Many of the "*pensionados*" eventually became leaders in Philippine government and business.

The Gokongwei program includes, among others, Chinese culture, government, economy and Mandarin language training in Beijing.

All applicants can e-mail JGSHI Corporate Human Resources vice president Manuel del Rosario at noli.delrosario@urc.com.ph, or call telephone numbers (02) 395-2336 and (02) 633-7631, local 138.

Coca-Cola donates $1M to PGH

THE COCA-COLA group has donated $1 million to the Philippine General Hospital, which will celebrate its 100th year of providing quality health care this year.

"PGH today is really blessed as we approach our centennial year. We have really been counting our blessings since last year; we have had a wellspring of philanthropy from both the government and the private sector. Of course today we are overwhelmed by this donation from Coca-Cola," said Dr. Carmelo Alfiler, director of the PGH,

"This donation will really go a long way in rebuilding three patient pay blocks and one charity ward," he continued. "And these blocks will not only render service to the paying patients of the hospital, but also to the poor and marginalized patients of the charity wards. These pay blocks will also generate some income which we will use for the operation of the hospital in general. So with that, I join the whole PGH community in thanking Coca-Cola for this very generous donation."

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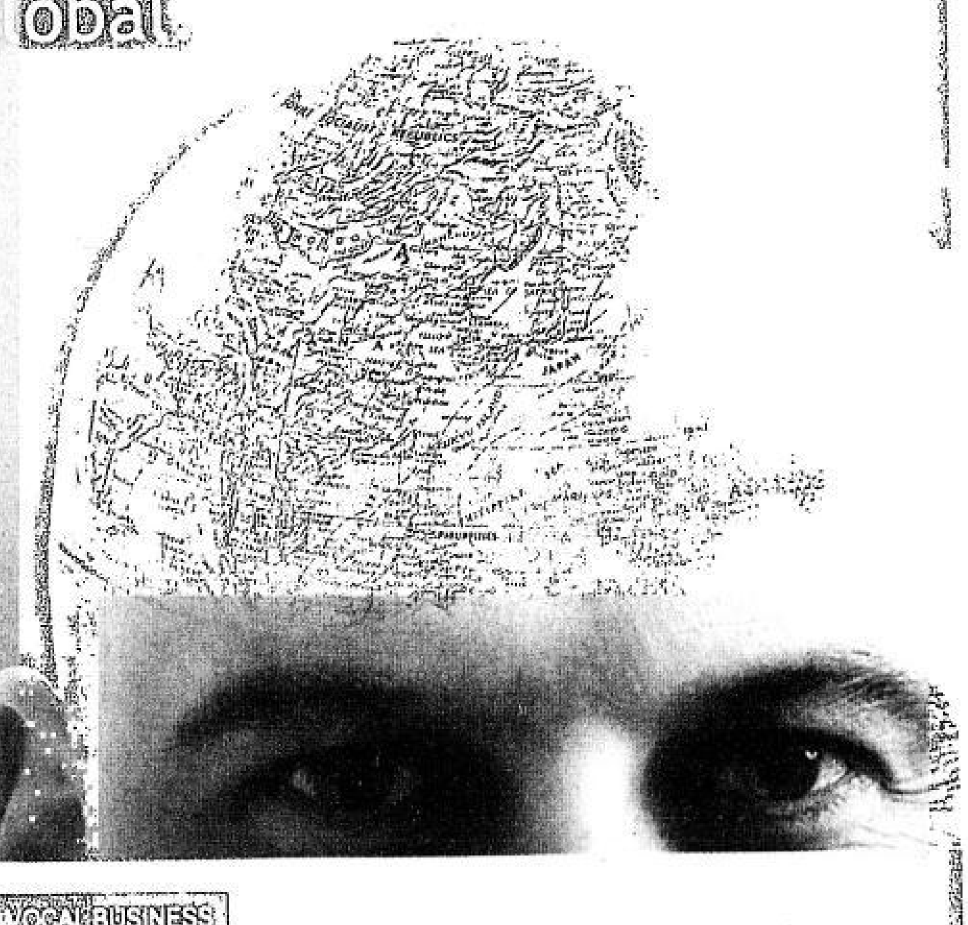

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Investments turned sour

Corporate Securities Info

Raul Palabrica

WHEN PEOPLE AGREE to pool their resources together to engage in business, a sense of optimism usually accompanies their action.

They look forward to receiving, some time in the future, a fair return on their investment.

But business, like life, is not meant to be a bed of roses. For one reason or another, businesses fail or expectations of profits do not materialize.

When this happens, the investor's initial reaction is to demand an explanation from the people who were tasked with running the business. And if the explanation is not to his liking, to ask for a refund of the money he put into the enterprise.

It makes no difference that the investor knew the risks involved when he added his money into the corporate kitty.

The question of whether a stockholder can demand a repayment of his subscription to shares of stock in a corporation was the subject of a query to the Securities and Exchange Commission.

It involved a minority stockholder who wanted his company to buy back his stocks despite the fact that it is in serious financial trouble.

The SEC stated that the law does not give stockholders the right to demand a refund of their investment in line with the principle that the subscription to the company's stocks constitutes a trust fund for the benefit of the creditors.

Consent

The entire subscription is, in effect, the treasure chest from which those who have extended credit or services to the corporation can look to for payment of whatever amount may be due and owing to them.

Also, by subscribing to the stocks, the stockholders are deemed to have entered into a contract among themselves from which no one can withdraw without the consent of the others.

The requirement on unanimous stockholder consent is based on the principle that those who contributed to the common fund (or totality of the subscriptions whether fully paid or not) have a right to give or withhold their consent to any action that may result in the fund's reduction.

The SEC explained that the approval process "springs from the necessity of imposing safeguards against the depletion by a corporation of its assets and impairment of its capital for the protection of the creditors."

But even if the stockholders give their consent and the interests of the creditors are safeguarded, no reacquisition of shares can be made unless the corporation has unrestricted retained earnings in its books to cover the buy back.

Unrestricted retained earnings (also known as surplus profits) refer to the earnings of a corporation that have not been set aside or earmarked for any corporate purpose, such as, payment of obligations or to fund future projects.

It's money in the corporate coffers that the company can, if its directors deem it proper, distribute to its stockholders by way of cash dividends.

Extra cash

With the surplus profits, the disbursement of corporate funds to repurchase the shares of a stockholder is not expected to adversely affect the interests of the corporation's creditors.

Absent that extra money, the stockholder who wants out has to wait for more profitable times before he can ask the corporation to refund his investment.

If the dissatisfied stockholder is really in earnest about cutting his ties with the corporation, he can sell his stocks to third parties.

On this point, the SEC said that unless there are restrictions in a company's articles of incorporation, the sale or transfer of shares by a stockholder to a third party does not require the consent of the corporation and cannot be prevented by it or its officers.

There's a caveat to this action: The sale or transfer will not be allowed unless the selling stockholder has paid in full his subscription.

Under the Corporation Code, a subscription contract is considered one, entire and indivisible contract; it cannot be divided into portions.

The stockholder cannot demand the issuance of a stock certificate covering his subscription until he has paid the corporation the full value of his subscription.

A situation may arise where the subscription of the exiting stockholder is not yet fully paid but somebody is interested in buying the shares of stock.

The SEC said the sale will be allowed on condition that there will only be one buyer and he is willing to assume the payment obligation for the unpaid subscription, and the remaining stockholders agree to the sale.

The consent of the stockholders is required because the introduction of a new party constitutes a novation or modification of the subscription contract earlier entered into by the original stockholders. *(For feedback, please write to rpalabrica@inquirer. com. ph.)*

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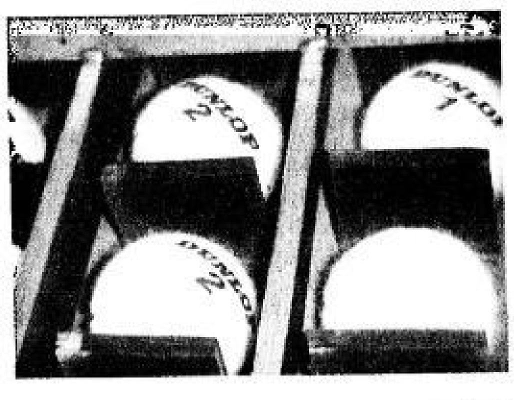
Breaking into the tennis world a ball at a time



Slazenger CHAMPIONSHIP
Slazenger WIMBLEDON ULTRA VIS
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SOME of the RP-made tennis balls

By Abigail L. Ho

MANNY PACQUIAO—WITH HIS powerful left and lightning quick moves—can be considered the country's greatest contribution to the world of sports right now.

Unknown to many, however, the Philippines is also making waves in the world of tennis.

Although the country has yet to produce a Grand Slam champion, the balls that tennis superstars worldwide use in the Wimbledon Championships are manufactured in the Philippines.

Danilo Jungo, managing director of Dunlop Slazenger (Philippines) Inc., says the British firm's Philippine plant within the Bataan Economic Zone has been exclusively providing the Wimbledon tournament balls since 2003.

"That was the first time that the Wimbledon ball was produced outside of the United Kingdom," he relates. "We may not have a tennis world champion yet, but we can say that the balls that the superstars use are made in the Philippines."

He says Wimbledon places an order for 5,000 dozen Slazenger balls—60,000 balls in all—for every tournament. Only 800 of these balls, however, are used in the actual tournament. The rest are sold to the public.

Before being shipped to the UK, each of these balls go through very stringent tests to ensure that they all meet the Wimbledon specifications—from the weight, to the fluff, to the bounce.

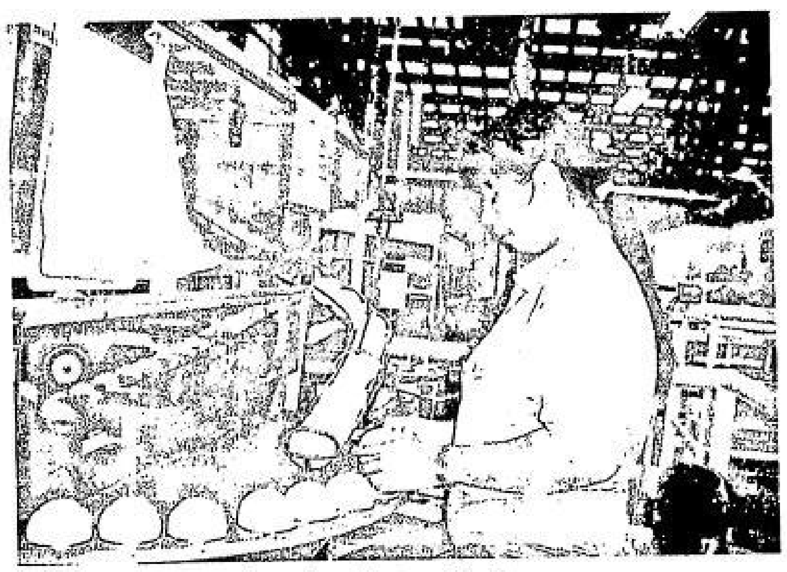
"And we watch the tournament on TV to see how the players are using our balls. Do they look satisfied? Some players sometimes blame the ball or the racket when they lose. We don't want our balls to be blamed, so we make sure each one is perfect," Jungo says.

Largest tennis ball producer

Even before bagging the Wimbledon contract, he says the Dunlop Slazenger plant in Bataan can already be considered the biggest manufacturer of tennis balls in the world.

When the plant started operating in 1977, it only produced 200 dozen balls a day. This was during the time when parent company Dunlop Slazenger International Inc. also had ball manufacturing plants in the UK, United States, Germany, South Africa and Indonesia.

Unknown to many, the Philippines is the world's biggest tennis ball manufacturer



WORKERS inspect championship tennis balls

The Bataan plant's parent firm decided to consolidate its manufacturing operations by closing down some plants and transferring operations to other facilities in other parts of the world.

In 1993, the company's Georgia plant was shut down and its operations transferred to the Philippines.

The next wave of consolidation took place in 1998, and the Philippines had to compete with plants in the Germany and the UK for survival.

In the end, the Philippine plant won, making it the biggest tennis ball manufacturing facility in the world.

"We have another small facility in Jakarta, but it can hardly be called a manufacturing plant. The Philippines is where almost all of the Dunlop and Slazenger balls come from," Jungo relates.

The Bataan plant now produces 22,000 dozen balls a day, almost all of which go to the export market.

Half of the plant's output is shipped to Europe and the UK, and around 1 million balls go to North America. The rest are sold in the Asia-Pacific region.

The plant also produces balls that are tailor-made for the German market, with specifications that are different from other regions and countries.

The local market gets around 60,000 dozen balls a year from the Bataan plant.

Proudly Pinoy

Although the company can be considered a fully foreign company, Jungo says it is managed purely by Filipinos, from the managing director down.

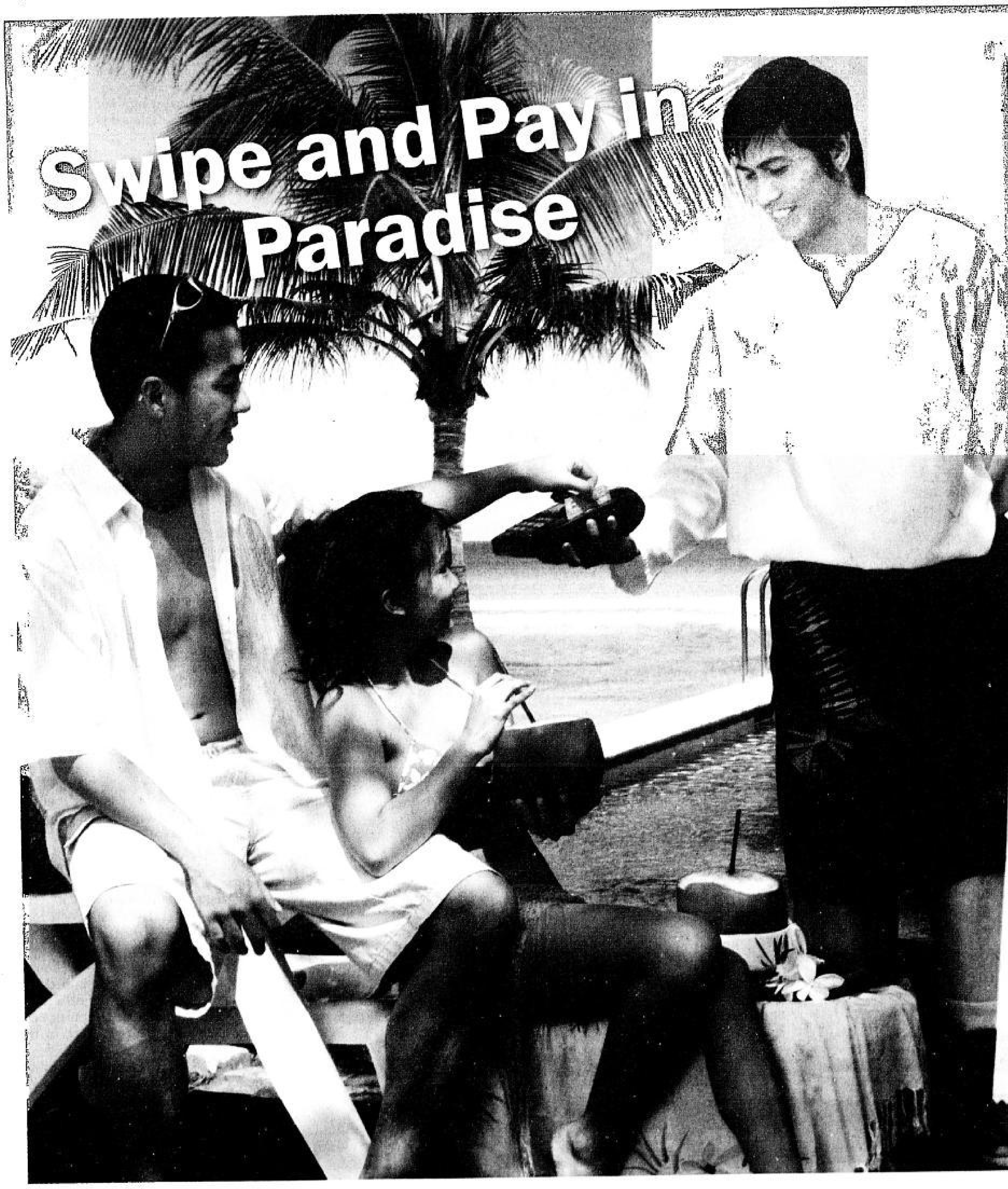
He says Filipino craftsmanship and management skills have enabled the country to emerge as the location of choice for the Dunlop Slazenger manufacturing facility, and these are the very things that will keep the UK-based company from transferring its manufacturing operations elsewhere, specifically to China.

"The Philippines is very competitive, particularly in the 'proper' tennis balls, or the quality balls," he says. "We're stable in the Philippines, so it's not necessary to go to China. In a sense, we're shattering the China myth with what we're doing here."

Apart from the actual tennis balls, he says most of the raw materials used to produce the balls now also come from the Philippines.

Around 70 percent of the rub-

BREAKING/ B3-2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Maverick adman talks of a new breed of consumers

CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER AND managing partner Ed Mapa Jr. of Euro RSCG Manila will give a talk at the forthcoming Philippine Marketing Association (PMA) convention on the subject "Prosumerism: The emergence of a new breed of consumers borne out of today's New Media."

From the tone of his topic alone, one can detect that Mapa is a non-conformist. He loves to challenge standard norms and would rather create new ones. He believes "the future belongs to those who dare to be first." This seems to be the secret of his rewarding career in the cutthroat arena of marketing and advertising.

"As fresh college graduates go, I started out my career as an insurance salesman without any roadmap. Quite quickly I discovered the job was not cut out for me. I then moved to the People's Journal and the Malaya newspapers as media representative for both publications," Mapa said.

Later on, Mapa made a bold decision to try a career in advertising at the Cebu office of Ogilvy and Mather. But as many mavericks go through, Mapa became restless again and returned to Manila to lead the then orange drink war between Zesto and Magnolia HI-C at Golden Grove Advertising. At Taipan-Bozell, Mapa introduced Pacific Sun, the first canned iced tea beverage in the market at that time.

Wanting to learn the new integrated marketing communications discipline, Mapa joined PR agency Agatep Associates Inc. where he got extensive training in marketing PR from Charlie Agatep, acknowledged as one of the pillars of PR in the Philippines.

Having acquired a wealth of skills in markcom from many years with Agatep Associates, Mapa felt he was now ready for the big time. He joined Euro RSCG Manila as the company's first client services director.

MAPA

For the next 10 years, Mapa has been part of the Euro RSCG Worldwide network, being cross-posted in Singapore as Southeast Asia regional account director for John Hancock, with stints in leading the Volvo, Philips and Peugeot accounts.

Back in Manila, Mapa led the Procter & Gamble (P&G) Zest Euro RSCG team that was cited by P&G Asia Australia and India in 2003 for "outstanding advertising and communications that doubled Zest volume share to 15 percent in just 14 months." His Zest Euro RSCG team was also recognized by P&G Zest Global Business Unit as "the best team in the worldwide Zest league."

"I also conducted primary research studies on consumers for various markets—Indonesia, Thailand and Manila for P&G Zest, Beijing for John Hancock and North America for the Philippines' Department of Tourism (DOT)," Mapa said.

Today, Mapa has taken on a bigger and bolder challenge, leading Euro RSCG 4D Manila as its chief operating officer. The Manila office is an affiliate of Euro RSCG Worldwide, hailed as the 2006 Global Agency Network of the Year by the prestigious publication Advertising Age, and the fifth-largest advertising agency network in the world, with 233 agencies in 75 countries.

Mapa admits that helping clients market their products in today's age of digital

marketing pose a great deal of challenge especially with the emergence of prosumers. "A prosumer is a consumer segment borne out of the digital technology of today," he explains. "As consumers get exposed to more information through these new digital technologies like the Internet and mobile technology, they become more marketing-savvy."

According to Mapa, unlike previous consumer generations who relied on traditional means of communication, prosumers use the Internet and mobile technology to seek information on various products and services. The process does not end upon the acquisition of new knowledge.

"Prosumers pose significant challenges to markets because the acquired information is actively shared and transferred to others. These prosumers have a different perspective on marketing and they can easily tell if a brand is fooling them or not," Mapa explained.

This new breed of discriminating buyers and users can also make or break a product or brand. "Prosumers were the first to embrace YouTube and the iced-tea phenomena," Mapa pointed out. "They are also the ones who now look at the back of every product label."

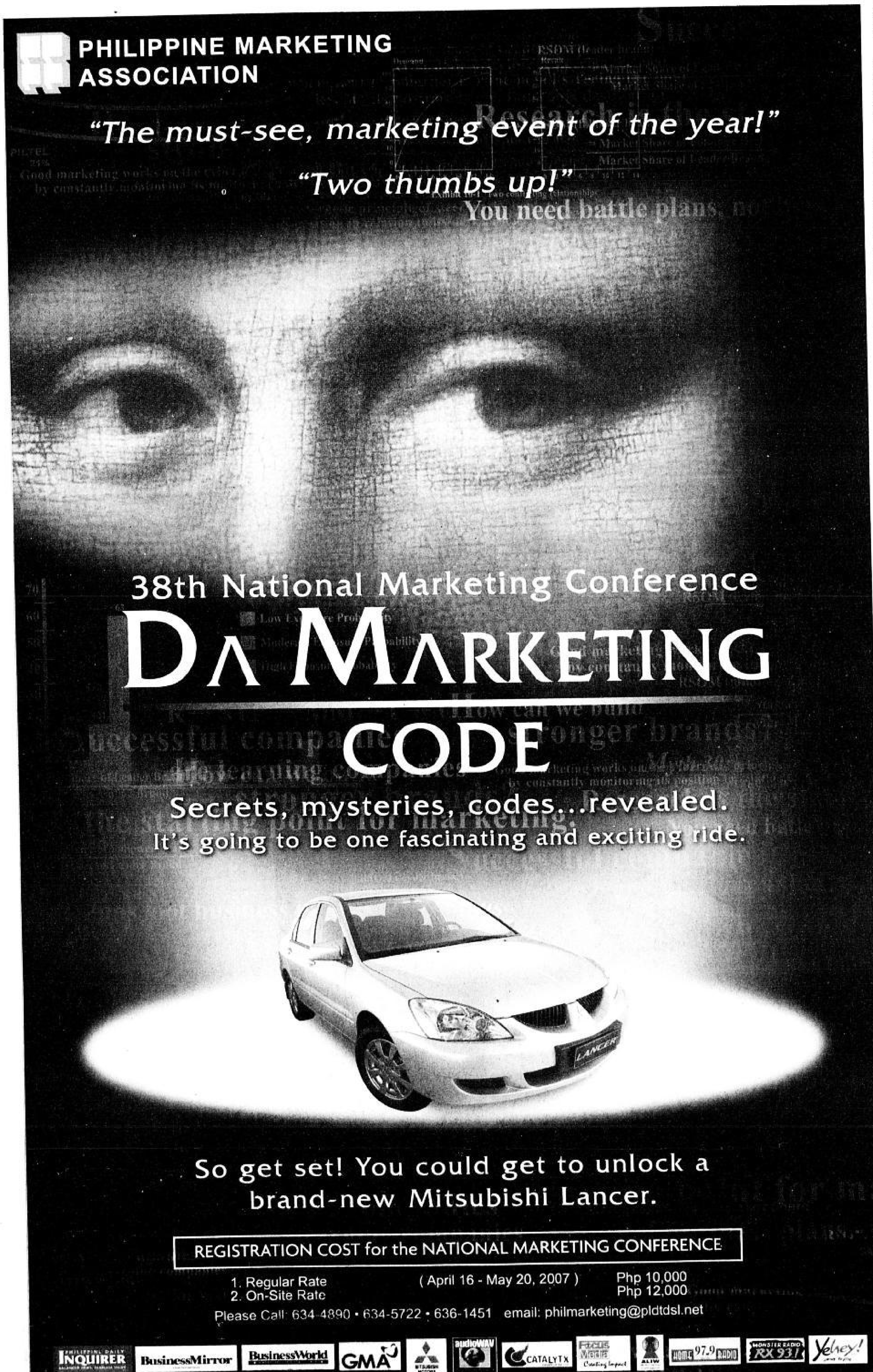
During a stint with Euro RSCG Singapore, Mapa and his teammates relied on the results of a prosumer research they conducted to develop the "Dr. Ink Beer" campaign for Asia Pacific Brewery which became Euro RSCG Singapore's most awarded multi-media campaign. "Based on the results of the prosumer survey, we developed multimedia games, websites, short messaging service (SMS) as well as staged events and parties tailored for a younger market which Asia Pacific Brewery wanted to reach."

For their part, Mapa's Euro RSCG Manila has also done successful communications projects for Yehey.com, the Department of Tourism and the Philippine Daily Inquirer, all anchored on extensive prosumer research. These include Inquest, the first multimedia mystery game in the Philippines, and the "Philippines: Explore. Experience. Return" website, the first online campaign of the DOT.

Mapa stresses marketing professionals should be wary of the presence of prosumers if they want to make their products successful globally in the age of digital marketing. Mapa said Euro RSCG Worldwide has already embarked on a global prosumer research which he will present to members of the PMA at the 38th National Marketing Conference, May 23-24, 2007, Hotel Sofitel Philippine Plaza, Pasay City.

Mapa will disclose how budding and established marketing professionals can decipher the characteristics of a prosumer and how they can apply this new knowledge in developing successful marketing programs.

For more information, call 634-4890 or 634-5722.



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Breaking into tennis world a ball at a time

From page B3-1

ber used for the balls come from Mindanao, with the balance sourced from Indonesia, he says.

"We're in the Philippines, so we may as well work with Philippine companies. We're very committed to the Philippine economy. As much as we can, we get local materials," he says.

In working with the Mindanao rubber producers, he says the company is not only helping the local rubber industry by getting its rubber supply from here, but is also enabling the rubber manufacturers to better compete in the world market.

"When we started using Philippine rubber three years ago, we also started to educate the manufacturers by telling them what kind of rubber we need. We also transfer our learnings from the international market to them so that they can be more competitive, both on the cost and technical aspects," he says.

Plans

Jungo says the company is now trying to make its operations more efficient, in preparation for an eventual expansion.

"We're trying to improve the condition of our older machines. We're also buying machines that consume less power so we can cut our costs," he says. "We hope to get more volume from the market. There's still room for a capacity increase. We want to supply all the major tournaments."

Just last year, during the Wimbledon in Manila event, UK Ambassador Peter Beckingham highlighted the fact that the balls being used in the world's oldest tennis tournament are being manufactured right here in the Philippines.

"Dunlop Slazenger has reason to be proud that the tennis balls used in Wimbledon are manufactured here in the Philippines," he had said in a speech.

Judging from the way things are going, Jungo says that will be the case for many years to come.

Research claims technology good for Filipino families

DOES TECHNOLOGY BREAK UP FAMILIES?

Contrary to popular notion, the latest research conducted by OMD Philippines, a media communications specialist, showed it's not really the case. In fact, Filipino families have been reaping the best out of technology in keeping their own families intact.

In a recent press conference, OMD Philippines said that 89 percent of respondents agree that technology enabled them to remain in-contact with other family members. Meanwhile, 66 percent of the respondents said that it will be difficult to stay in touch with families and friends without technology. Almost 75 percent expect that life would be better in the future because of technology.

"I am actually glad that technology has helped in bringing the Filipino family closer. Technology has made the Filipinos appreciate their own families and their way of living," said Ador Perez, COO of OMD Philippines.

Tradition over technology

Even on the advent of what is dubbed as the "Information Age," the Filipino family still embraces traditional values with the family remaining as a person's number one priority. Filipinos' care for the elderly still prevails as 95 percent of the respondents say that our elders are highly respected. Even dining together with your family members is still vital according to 81 percent of respondents.

Also, the research noted that the Filipino family still enjoys going out on vacations together. And even the simplest activities such as watching television or movies have been the favorite bonding event of families with 87 percent and 82 percent of respondents saying so respectively. In reality, families mostly enjoy watching comedy shows, movies and news coverage together.

"Traditional family values have been with Filipinos for centuries and it is good that these values can co-exist with technological growth. Even I, myself, make sure that I keep these traditional values part of my own family," Perez said.

With the emergence of the multitasking lifestyle, the Filipino family has given 10.9 hours of their day in the consumption of media and 14 hours for technology. It pointed out that on the average consumption of media, respondents say that they spend 4.8 hours over the Internet and 2.7 hours watching television.

But it is important to note that Filipinos spend 6.1 hours with their families and almost 1.9 hours with their friends while 23.2 hours are spent for everyday essentials like sleeping, school or work.

Mobile phones still remain as the major tool for communicating among family members with 50 to 66 percent of respondents saying that they use their mobile phones in talking with their parents, children, siblings and relatives. The mobile phones have penetrated 94 percent of households, according to OMD's research.

It was also found out in the study that Filipinos have already recognized technology's capacity to enhance social lives—76 percent said that they have friends in different countries and cities because of the Internet. Also, 53 percent said that the technology provided them a platform in overcoming their shyness.

Versus the global family

A Filipino family owns on average 10.6 technological devices with at least 2.1 computers and 2.4 television sets. The Philippines is not far from averages in countries such as South Korea, China, France and the United States.

The Filipino household is still the most regular user of mobile phones in comparison to other countries. The Philippines is also above the global average of 8.7 hours per day for media consumption.

Also, the country gained higher percentages on how families would want to receive advertisements compared to the global average. Families said that it is all right for them to see advertisements on newspapers, magazines and television. Meanwhile, we are at par with our Asian neighbors with preferences on getting advertisements on personal media such as mobile phones and MP3 players.

'Digital family life'

Improvement in technology brings opportunities that until today remained to be untapped. As the OMD research suggested, advertisements should be geared toward these new opportunities as these are what families have been dealing with at present.

"We at OMD Philippines believe that technology has opened a lot of new windows for disseminating information. Along side traditional media, it created new and even better ways of interacting and getting messages across. We believe that OMD can help companies be part of this growing trend of the digital family," Perez added.

Pinoy values shine in high-level gathering

LOIDA Nicolas Lewis, past president of the National Federation of Filipino American Associations with other speakers at the Milken Global Conference

BEVERLY HILLS—IT'S A ROUGH-and-tumble world and the Sorsogon-born go-getter was lecturing peers in international mega-business about personal values.

Loida Lewis, past president of the National Federation of Filipino American Associations, is chair and CEO of TLC Beatrice LLC, the Lewis Family investment firm. She is also the chair and CEO of TLC Beatrice China, which operates retail convenience stores in four major cities in China.

On Wednesday, following a fellow panelist's remark during one of the sessions of the Milken Global Conference 2007, Ms Lewis told entrepreneurs who were part of the audience not to listen to what the speaker just said about doing business overseas.

Despite the popularity of outsourcing nowadays to take advantage of lower costs in emerging economies, one should be cautious and approach things with a 'grain of salt,' she said. Anyone looking to expand overseas should exercise due diligence in knowing and choosing the right people with the right values to employ. In China, for example, government policies can change abruptly and would adversely affect the business. For that reason it is best to take into the fold people who are part of the government. Additionally, she said, big money is here and other countries still look up to the United States as the leading economy. For businesses needing funding, there is capital looking for companies with track records of making profits and have good strategies to make more money.

Lewis later said that businessmen should have core values of integrity and take care of customers. Being in business, you must know how to make profit, know where you're going and observe the Golden Rule, she said. Every year an entrepreneur must set a goal: What the sales goal is, the income goal. One in small business and not taking salary must also bear in mind that the amount corresponding to the salary is not counted as part of profit, she said.

Lewis took over the family business a year after the death of her husband, Reginald F. Lewis, in 1993 and started liquidating nonperforming assets of the company. Her company has a meat plant and a school in Bicol.

The other members of the panel debating the pros and cons of doing business in other parts of the globe were Graham Clempson, European managing partner of Mid Ocean Partners UK; David Kim, CEO of Baja Fresh; Eran Salu, owner, publisher and CEO, Business Leader Media; and Matthew McGovern, managing director, SBI Group. Moderator was Rafael Pastor, a former News Corp. executive who is now chair and CEO of an organization for chief executives, Vistage International.

The yearly Milken Institute Global Conference is a high-end gathering of decision-makers and according to company officials, more than 3,000, many coming from other countries, were at the three-day 10th anniversary with the theme Shaping the Future held at the Beverly Hilton starting last Monday.

The sheer size of the 470 panelists tackling such gut issues as dependence on oil, the Internet, the environment, real estate, private equity, changing the world order, philanthropy, education, business and the economy, politics, health care and others was simply remarkable and one had a picking of about a dozen sessions—some private—press briefings, book signings, receptions and other activities going on at the same time in different suites of the venue hotel.

Sen. John Kerry addressed the audience and, together with wife Teresa Heinz, signed books on climate change on Monday.

Other conference highlights included sessions with former astronaut Sally Ride, director Sydney Pollack, Kirk Douglas, architect Frank Gehry, Andre Agassi, former Rep. Harold Ford Jr., Los Angeles attorney Rocky Delgadillo, LAPD chief William Bratton, Ted Turner and others.

Leading companies competed for space to have their businesses and logos exhibited in the area.

The Milken Institute is billed as a nonprofit, nonpartisan economic think tank whose scholars publish research papers and conduct conferences on global and regional economies, human capital, demographics and capital markets. According to a biography, the career of Michael Milken, its chair, has mirrored his three main professional passions: Medical research, education and finance. He co-founded the Milken Family Foundation in 1982 and also heads FasterCures—a Washington-based think tank that works to remove barriers to progress against all life-threatening diseases—and the Prostate Cancer Foundation.

According to its website, the yearly global conference is the largest such event in North America, an unparalleled opportunity to network and to exchange ideas with a large, diverse and influential group of people who have come from more than 50 countries. It saves busy executives time because they can meet—in one place, at one event—global thought leaders from a wide range of disciplines. *From the US-based Weekend Balita*

Serving OFWs' needs

MANNY AND NELIA SIGGAOAT, OWNERS of the popular Manels leather shoe store chain, still remember their early years when they quit their jobs to become full-time entrepreneurs.

It was in 1964, and their first business was a grocery cum drugstore. "The original Manels store was a grocery and a pharmacy at the back of the Philippine Women's University (PWU) in Manila. We were newly married at that time. Manels was our first 'child,'" Manny recalls.

Since he is a certified public accountant (CPA), Manny took care of the finance side while Nelia, who taught chemistry and physics at PWU, oversaw the various businesses that also included a parlor, a boutique, a canteen and eventually, a leather goods store in 1973.

On their first year as entrepreneurs, Manny would give out loyalty coupons that entitled customers to a gift on their 10th visit to encourage them to patronize their store.

More than 40 years since the first Manels store opened, the Siggaoats continue to live by their beliefs. As a result, Manels has become known for its reasonably priced and quality leather goods. They have also expanded their business. Manels Leathergoods Corp. now has subsidiaries that include a leather goods manufacturing firm, Siwon International Inc.; a company that oversees its export business, Leather Asia Inc.; and a nationwide distribution network that consist of stores such as Manels, Maphisto, Moda Nella, Moda Plus, Catch, Everything 100, and the Manels Total and Total Department Stores.

To better serve a big segment of its market—the families of overseas Filipino workers—Manels recently partnered with leading wireless services provider Smart Communications Inc. (Smart) to offer mobile phone-based remittance encashment services and payment systems in its stores.

Smart Padala remittance service booths have been set up in Total Department Stores in the provinces. In Manels stores, the Smart Money card is now an accepted payment tool.

"We want to serve the OFW market. Our stores in the provinces, especially in Southern Luzon, where there are many OFW families, are strategically located to enable them to more conveniently encash remittances," said Nelson Siggaoat, who is in charge of marketing and the department stores. Nelson, together with Noel, Nora and Mark, has been working alongside their parents in further growing the business.

Smart Padala is the first international cash remittance service through text. Through its remittance partners abroad, an OFW can send money straight to their families' and relatives' Smart Money electronic cash cards. Remitting money via Smart Padala is cheaper, and very secure.

Since the Smart Money card is linked to the Smart subscribers' mobile phone, beneficiaries receive a text message every time money is remitted to their Smart Money cards. The money may be withdrawn in Banco de Oro, Expressnet and Bancnet ATMS nationwide, the Smart Wireless Centers, and now, in Manels Total and Total Department Stores.

The Smart Money card also serves as an electronic wallet or debit card, and can be used as payment tool for purchases in stores that accept MasterCard Electronic, including Manels stores and Total Department Stores.

Manels Total and Total Department Stores are located in Laoag, Ilocos Norte; Olongapo, Zambales; Calamba, Laguna; San Pablo, Laguna; Tuguegarao, Cagayan; Dasmariñas, Cavite; and Gapan, Nueva Ecija. There are over 40 Manels stores nationwide.

From offering stamp coupons, Nelson said they have also adapted their marketing strategy to include text-based promos. A few years ago, they raffled off a house and lot to its department store customers. "They had to register through text," he said.

The elder Siggaoat said his children are now more involved in the businesses. Aside from Nelson and Nora, Noel oversees the Manels and Sonoma businesses, while Mark, the youngest, is the techie. He is involved in the IT side of the operations.

He also fondly acknowledged that his wife Nelia was actually the one who convinced him to go into leather goods in 1973.

"We went into the leather goods business because it was our first chance to open a store in the mall. At the time, there was only one space left at Quad (now Glorietta), and it was for a leather goods store. I grabbed the opportunity. Then I looked at the Yellow Pages and the Encyclopedia Britannica to know more about 'leather goods.' We sold director's chairs, saddle bags, tobacco pouches, wallets. Later on, we sold shoes," narrated Nelia.

"There was a high demand for our leather tobacco pouches. Our clients were mostly tourists and ambassadors. They would place orders, and there were times when our suppliers could not deliver the orders on time. *Napapahiya kami.* We decided to go into manufacturing of leather goods. Our first 'factory' was at the back of our garage, using an old sewing machine," added Nelia.

The factory is now a big complex in Clark Special Economic Zone, Pampanga. It manufactures leather shoes and bags for export and also for the local market.

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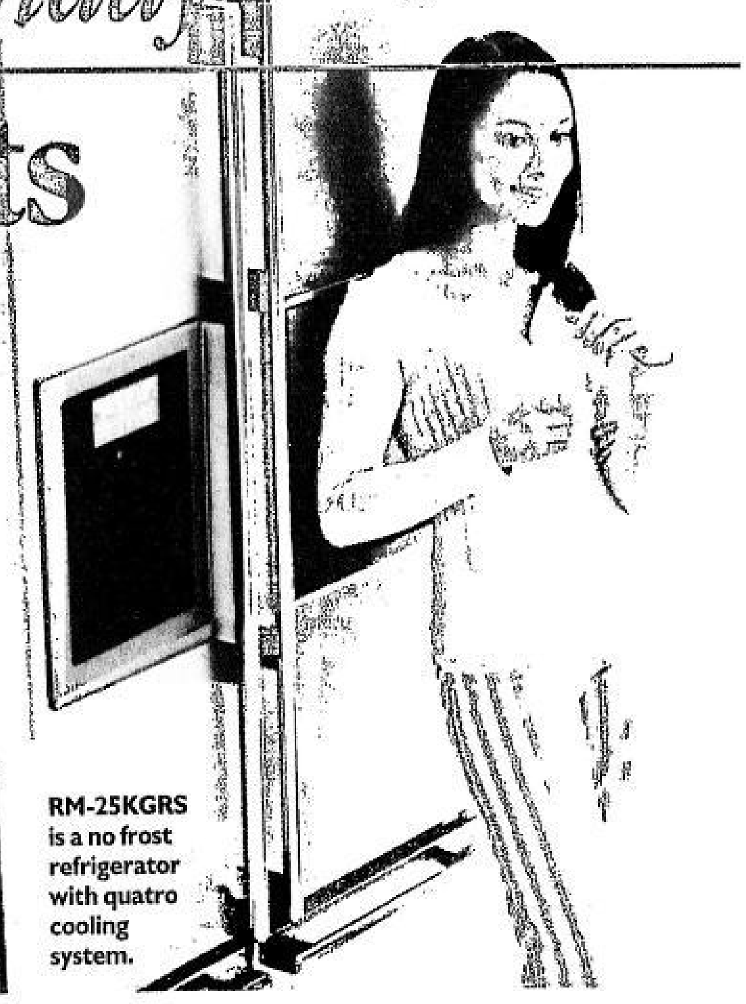
Samsung's latest products deliver purer living



RM-25KGRS is a no frost refrigerator with quatro cooling system.

By Jo Anne E. Padiernos

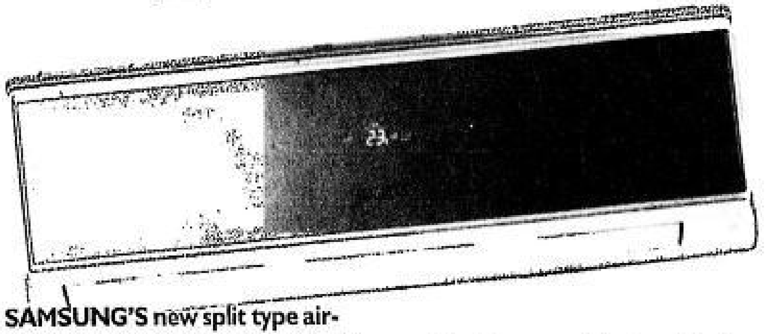
IT WAS ITS PEOPLE-FIRST POLICY and commitment to human health that clinched it for Samsung.

That policy led Samsung to introduce in 2004 its silver nano technology—which involves the use of particles to sterilize and deodorize its diverse product lines.

And it was that same policy that enabled the South Korean conglomerate to aim for the top of the home appliance trade.

"Our goal is to become the number one refrigerator and washing machine brand in the region by 2009," said Amby Navarro, Samsung's product manager for home appliances, during the Samsung Digital Home Appliances Roadshow 2007 recently.

New line of appliances



SAMSUNG'S new split type air-conditioner, AS-24VBA, has micro plasma ion technology.

After Samsung introduced its silver nano health system across all product range—from refrigerators, air-conditioners and washing machines, to cellular phones, and microwave ovens—the company continues to think of other ways to provide consumers with a purer living experience.

Recently, Samsung unveiled its new line of home appliances, all of which feature silver nano health system combined with the latest in technology.

THE TOP range washing machine, WD-6102, features the first air wash technology.

The Samsung Quatro Cooling Convertible Refrigerator, its flagship product, has four separate and distinct compartments of fridges and freezers, with each controlled and cooled by its own separate cooler (evaporator), preventing the mixing of odors and circulation of bad odor throughout the entire refrigerator. This way, the original flavor of food is retained.

Guaranteed fresh

Also, each separate compartment has a humidity level four times higher than other conventional coolers. This guarantees the freshness of food, Navarro said.

The WD-6102, Samsung's top range washing machine, features the world's first air wash system that removes unpleasant odor, microscopic allergens, harmful bacteria and microbes through the washer's hot air and physical strength.

"This product is very good for babies and those people with sensitive skin," Navarro said, explaining that the machine eradicates 99.9 percent of germs and prevents bacteria for up to 30 days.

Samsung's AS-24VBA, its flagship air-conditioner, is notable for its cutting-edge technology and innovative, convention-defying design. It has the world's first micro plasma ion (MPI) technology which generates active hydrogen atoms together with oxygen ions.

The MPI device generates 480,000 ions to strongly purify the air. Compared to other brands, Samsung's MPI has the highest flu virus removal rate at 99.6 percent, according to Navarro.

"MPI eliminates harmful particles by removing SARS-associated corona virus and also influenza virus, which has the same genetic structure as the avian influenza virus."

Samsung's air-conditioner has a good sleep mode, a temperature control program which, based on the study conducted by the National Bukyung University in Korea, allows a person to have 82-percent longer deep-sleep hours (122 minutes more compared to 67 minutes using other brands). It also benefits one's health because the good sleep mode maintains comfortable skin temperature throughout the night through precise temperature control.

The air-conditioner does not consume as much power. Its energy consumption is reduced by as much as 30 percent, compared to other models in the market, Navarro said.

"Our strategy this year is to incorporate our premium innovation into products which the masses can fully enjoy," Navarro said. "We are expanding our product lineup to cater to every consumer."

Novel perspective

"Right now, we would also like to offer Samsung to more consumers by penetrating into the mass premium segment."

Other products offered by Samsung include RT-53MAMT TGV refrigerator with coolever zone, WA-10UP washing machine with silver nano technology, and AS-12FA split type air-conditioner with good sleep mode.

Samsung, which lives up with its novel perspective that "a brand is created by its customers," continues to develop products that will cater to the needs of the local market.

Through focus group discussion with dealers and researchers, Samsung hopes to improve its application of silver nano technology in its products.

It also aims to apply the technology to basic products, said Navarro.

"In air-conditioners before, for example, we only apply the silver nano particles or ions in the filter. But last year, we also coated our evaporators with silver ions to better protect consumers."

Navarro also said that, before, only the high-end products used to contain the silver nano health system.

But now, he added, that feature may be found in all their mid-range products.

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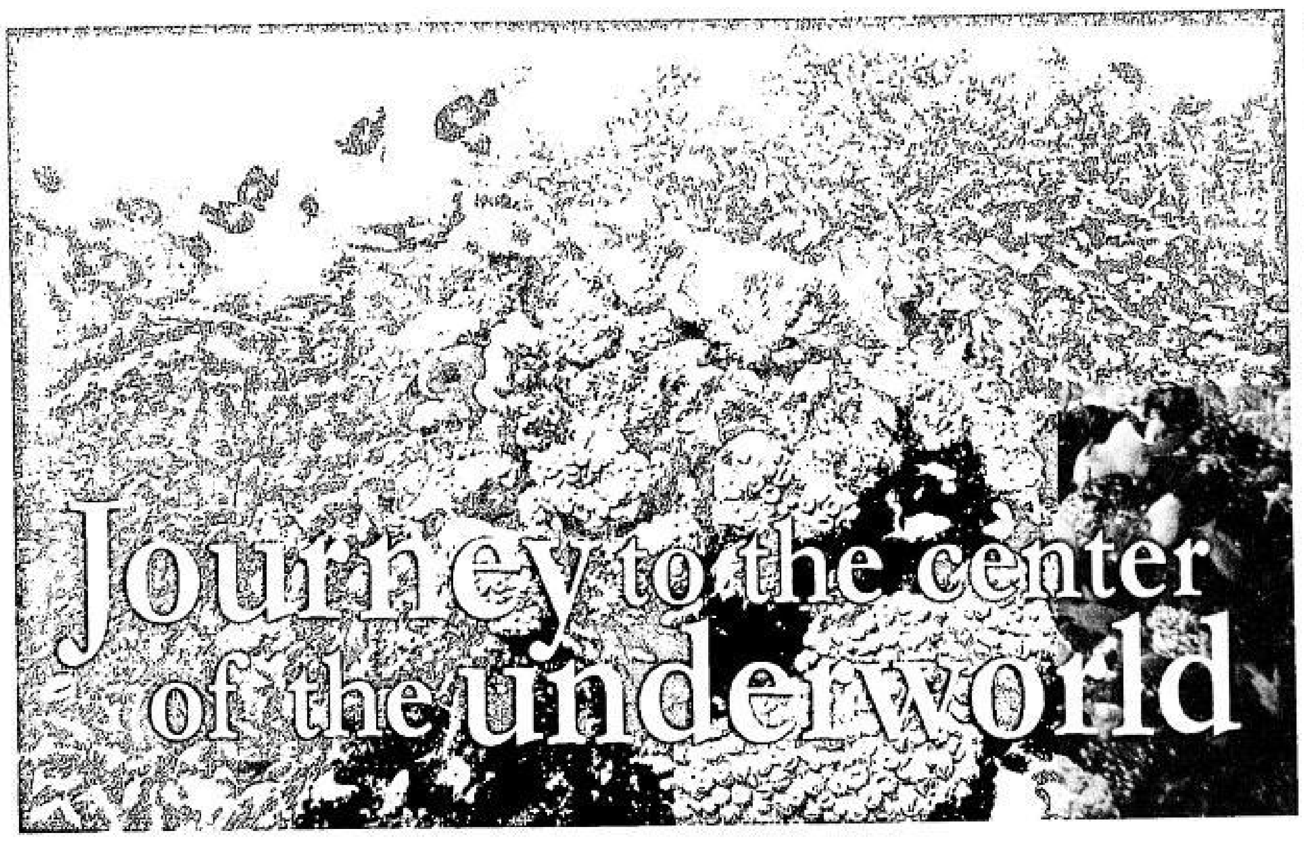

Journey to the center of the underworld

By Nicolo F. Bernardo
Contributor

THERE MUST BE SOMEthing under the waters of the Verde Island Passage between Batangas and Mindoro, where a treasure trove of 1,736 overlapping marine species can be found in just a 10x10-sq km area. It is the highest concentration of marine life in the world no dead man's chest can contain.

The World Conservation Union (WCU) declared the passage "the center of the center of marine shore fish biodiversity," dethroning Sulawesi, Indonesia.

Sea turtles, humphead wrasses, dolphins, sharks, sea snakes, giant groupers, clams, crabs thrive here amid garden coral reefs and rock formations of every kind.

"Nearly 60 percent of all marine species are located in the Verde Island Passage between Mindoro and Luzon," said marine biologist Kent

JOURNEY/ C2

The Verde Island Passage between Batangas and Mindoro has been declared the world's center of marine shore biodiversity

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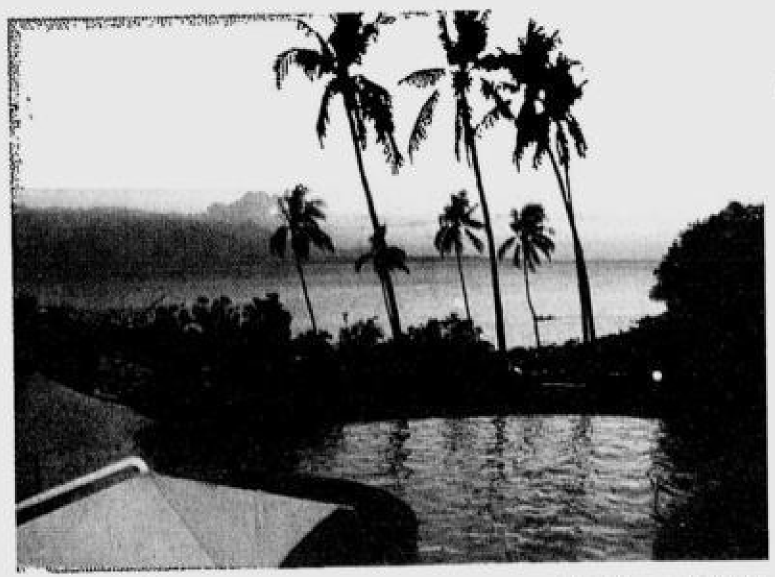
DITO SMART TAYO

Journey to the center . . .

From page C1



SUNSET at Isla Verde

ISLA Verde view from hilltop

Carpenter of the WCU, who dubbed the area "the world's blue water version of the Amazon River basin."

Carpenter's theory is that land barriers, surface temperatures, and restriction of currents isolated the sea basins around the country from one another, making it possible for the species to evolve in concentrated diversity.

"About 150 of the species can be found in the Philippines alone, and there are others still unidentified," said Leslie de la Peña of the Philippine Commission on Sports Scuba Diving. "By locating the country as the world's marine biodiversity hotspot, we could bring thousands of tourists and explorers to our coastal municipalities."

Washing Machine

The Verde Island has 13 diving spots including San Agapito, Lito Cave and the Mini-Canyon/Washing Machine. "Living Asia" twice featured the island this year, with a shot of a school of dolphins.

San Agapito boasts of a submerged mountain with a pinnacle that drops off to 100 m or 330 ft. It is home to sergeant majors, damsels, anthias, eels, nudibranchs, surgeon fishes, fusiliers, tunas, batfishes and jacks.

There are bubbles that rise from the ocean floor apparently due to volcanic activities at the site!

"There's so much life down there. When divers speak of Verde Island, they think of San Agapito with its giant gorgonian fans and garden of corals," said Virgilio Casingal, Verde Island Resort's dive master and instructor.

On the sea surface of five underwater canyons, one can see whirlpools caused by the changing currents. The canyons have been formed by the water movements that spin divers in a roller-coaster ride. The bigger and wilder the currents, the more species of pelagics, trevallies, parrotfishes, frogfishes, tube worms, seasquirts and reef sharks there are to meet.

The current usually starts slow and gradually begins churning. Unexperienced divers are advised to stay close to the bottom and just watch the fishes roll.

Since not all tourists are willing to dare dive or snorkel, the island's resort offers a glass bottom boat where passengers can get a view of the undersea without getting wet.

Lost galleon, lost pirates

The legend of Jack Sparrow may be fiction but Verde Island was once the abode of pirates who attacked Batangas before residents sold their lands to the Pastor family that now runs the Verde Island Resort.

Centuries earlier, Spanish captain Juan Verde discovered the place, Christianized its tribes and named it after himself. Remnants of a 1621 wooden galleon ship, Nuestra Señora Dela Vida, was discovered with its cannons, terracotta jars and Ming porcelains.

Isla Verde is very panoramic, with a west view of Mt. Halcon, the 15th highest peak in the country. The resort owners made sure that no tree was cut to build the villas of concrete and bamboo. In the island hill is also reportedly a proof of a deluge.

"Atop the Verde Island hill are stones awashed in sea water, meaning, the water level was once about 300 m above sea level," said Edwin Bautista, executive assistant of the Pastor family. "The rock formation on the beach and atop the hill is the same."

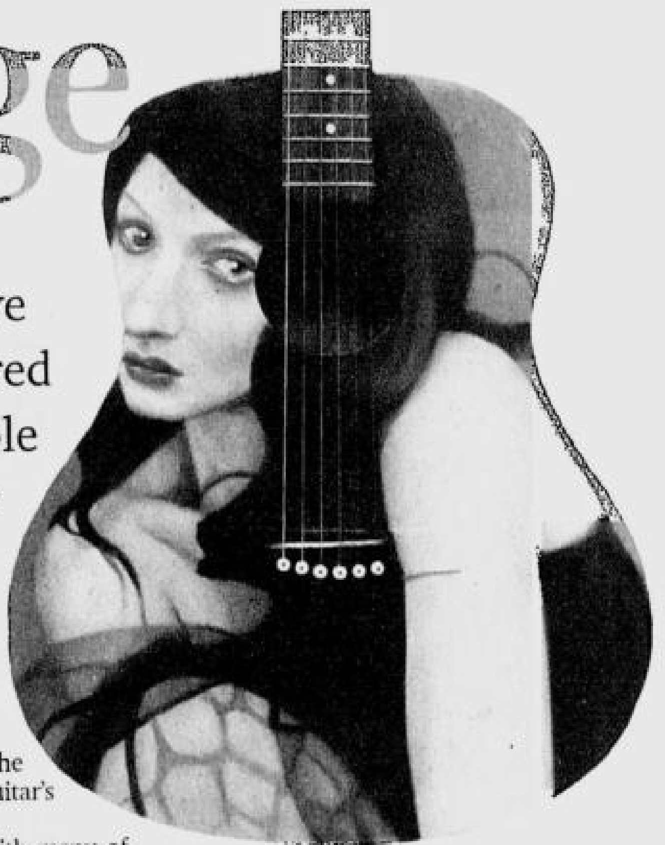
The natural riches of the island and its seas were preserved despite the place being a residential area. It is a marine sanctuary where it is legal for the villagers to fish.

The sixth international underwater photo competition tour "Celebrate the Sea Festival" will include the island in September. Exactly the place where adventurers and explorers like Jack Sparrow could stage endless photo shoots and acrobatics without sailing at world's end.

"Down under you can take different dives—wall dive, drift dive, shallow dive, and enter a new world of corals, sea creatures, caves, canyons and mountains all within reach," Casingal said.

Fitting the image to the format

By Constantino C. Tejero



"ENVY," by Jason Montinola

No one would have seriously considered the guitar to double as a canvas. Trust the imagination then to serve the young

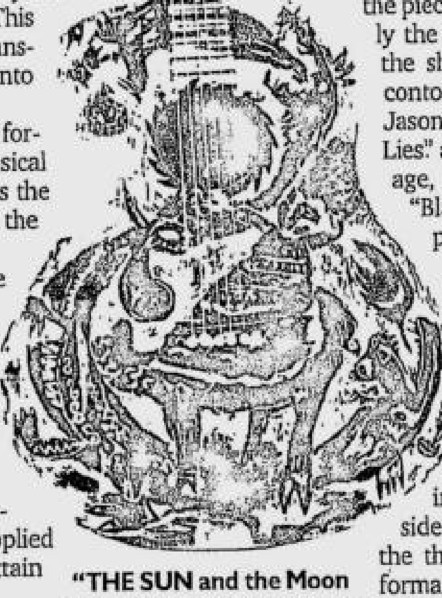
THE GUITAR IS AN OBJECT THAT drives one into flights of fancy and lyrical effusions. The six-string Spanish variety, particularly, reminds one of *harana* and *kundiman*, the poems of Federico García Lorca and Magdalena Jalandoni.

One can even see the contours of a woman's body in its swelling curves. But no one would have seriously considered it to double as a canvas. Trust the imagination then to serve the young.

Consider "Celebration of Youth," 25 pieces in oil, acrylic, light industrial paint, woodcut and mixed media on guitars, recently in The Big & Small Art Co. at the Artwalk, L/4, Bldg. A, SM Megamall, Mandaluyong.

This is an offshoot of the exhibit "Art on Violin" successfully mounted by the gallery a few months earlier. This time 25 guitars have been transformed by 18 visual artists into virtual paintings.

It is not the conventional format, to be sure, but the musical instrument certainly serves as the shaped canvas favored by the Post-Painterly painters.



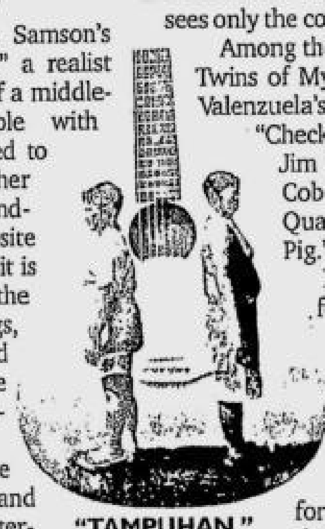
"THE SUN and the Moon Quarrel Meets the Year of the Pig," by Joey Cobcobo

The format may have changed, but one can see the artists have carried over their typical imageries on conventional canvas. Thus, in "After the Gold Rush," one sees Ruel Caasi's abstraction in rust-brown and aquamarine with his signature rigid white lines, so applied on the guitar's body as to attain an antiquated look.

Daniel Coquilla's characteristic top view of foreshortened bodies and upturned faces reappears in "Guitar-Makers" 1-2. And so do Ryan Jara's floating human figures and angelic forms in "Finger Collection."

EJ Cabangon's hyperrealist rendering of a teddy bear in brown and gray finds a fitting format in "Joyful Sorrow" 1-2, as the stuffed toy's shape fits the guitar's contour.

This is also true with many of the pieces in the show, particularly the close-up portraits where the shape of the face fits the contour of the guitar's body: Jason Montinola's "Sacred Lies" and "Envy" (powerful image, this); Olan Ventura's "Black Nazarene" (another potent image); Lynyrd Paras' "Tears."



"TAMPUHAN," by Jaypee Samson

In Jaypee Samson's "Tampuhan," a realist depiction of a middle-aged couple with backs turned to one another and each standing on opposite sides of the guitar, it is the theme that fits the format. The strings, hole and fingerboard act as dividing line and yawning gulf reinforcing the sense of separation.

Here, too, are quirky takes on the musical instrument. In "Harana" and "Rock 'n' Roll," Jerson Samson has literally transformed it into what look like a spade and a broom, respectively.

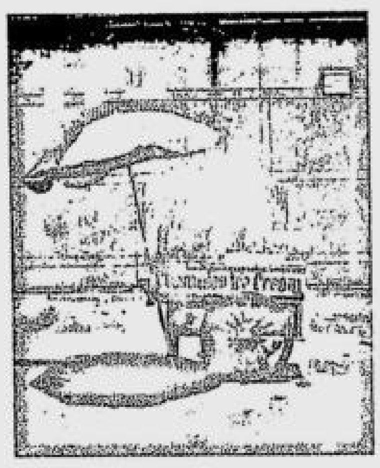
In "Walang Masamang Tinapay," Ryan Rubio has painted its hole into a man's teeth-lined maw and added an appendage to look like a long pointed tongue.

In some of these pieces, the guitar seems to vanish and the painted image takes over so that the viewer no longer thinks of the format but sees only the color and image.

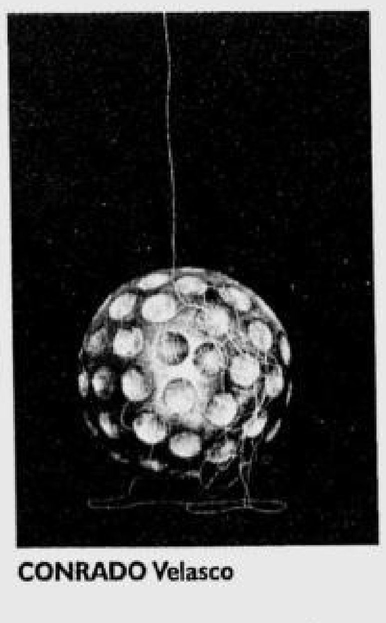
Among these are Froilan Calayag's "The Twins of My Undying Rhythms"; Wesley Valenzuela's "Untitled" 1; Joel Mendez's "Check Mate"; Paras' "Someday"; Jim Orencio's "True Value"; Joey Cobcobo's "The Sun and the Moon Quarrel Meets the Year of the Pig."

In these pieces, multiple forms, repeat lines and strong chromatics combine to give the impression of swarming and brimming over the musical instrument, blurring the boundaries and erasing the shape and details of the format. Here the guitar is incidental and the painting is all.

Silverlens Gallery's first photog grantees



POKLONG Anading



CONRADO Velasco

JOSÉ Enrique Soriano

SILVERLENS GALLERY, THE FIRST art gallery in the country to host and organize exclusively photo-based exhibitions, announces the first batch of awardees of its annual grants program.

The program aims to provide professional and financial support to photographers through various efforts, including acquisition of existing material.

The chosen artists under the acquisition category are Conrado Velasco, Steve Tirona, José Enrique Soriano and Poklong Anading.

Their works, now on exhibit in Silverlens Gallery along Pasong Tamo Extension in Makati, have become part of the Silverlens Foundation (SLFI) collection—the first permanent collection of photography in the Philippines.

The 2007 SLFI grantees show the range of possibilities in contemporary photography in the Philippines: historical record, activism, visual ambiguity, kitschy charade, visual poetry, documentary, and the hybrid of technical experimentation and formalist eloquence.

Photojournalist Soriano's "Episodes: Still Photos of the Unstill Mind" documents patients in a mental hospital and tackles the highly charged subject of mental illness.

Anading, in "Anonymity," offers a different facet of portraiture. Friends and strangers alike accommodate his request to pose individually while holding a round mirror over his/her face. His camera then captures the sunlight reflected by the mirror, making the heads appear both blank and blinding.

Tirona's "The Imelda Collection" shows the fashion photographer throwing the spotlight on the former First Lady in a series of meticulously choreographed tableaux, which served as publicity shots for her jewelry line sold on the Internet.

Art director Velasco's "String Theory," produced in 2003, is described by its creator as a series of "51 black-and-white gelatin prints with hanging and layout instructions." With their rigidly observed scale and composition, the photographs call to mind the visual tradition and practice of still-life painting or photography.

The "Silverlens Foundation Acquisition Show 2007" runs until June 2.

Silverlens was founded in 2005 by Isa Lorenzo, a masteral graduate of Parsons School of Design. The gallery is at Warehouse 2, Yupangco Bldg., 2320 Pasong Tamo Extension, Makati.

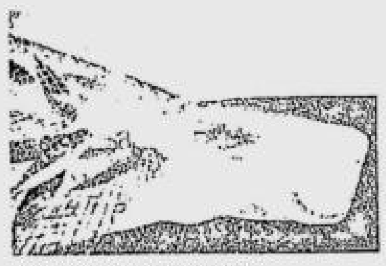
Call 8160044 or visit www.silverlensphoto.com. Silverlens is open 10 a.m.-7 p.m., Monday-Friday; and 1 p.m.-6 p.m. on Saturday.

VISUAL ARTS

Group exhibit at Serendra

"JOURNEY," A PRELUDE TO A SERIES OF EXHIBITS IN EUROPE, opens today at 7 p.m., in 1/of Gallery, Serendra, Bonifacio Global City, Taguig. Featured are the works of Aris Bagtas, Robert Deniega, Marissa Gonzales, Fred Ramirez, Camille de la Rosa, Fidel Sarmiento and Janice Liuson-Young. Call 9013152.

Auction

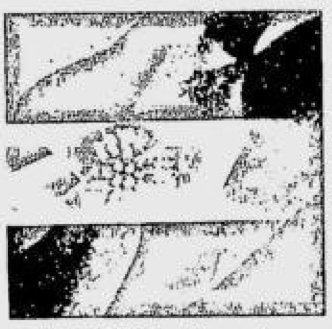


"THE FISHERMAN," by Ang Kiukok

Kayamanang Asya, Ink. will have a public auction of Philippine paintings and Asian collectibles on May 25, 7 p.m., at 2/F, LRI Plaza, 210 Nicanor Garcia St., Bel-Air II, Makati. Works by National Artists Bencab, Ang Kiukok, Manansala, Victor Edades, Hernando Ocampo and J. Elizalde Navarro will be sold along with Asian carpets, jars and ornaments. The auction lots may be viewed on May 21-25, 10 a.m.-7 p.m. Call 8536438-39 or e-mail kayamanang_asia@yahoo.com.ph.

Group exhibit at Fart Gallery

"Urban Kaleidoscope," a group exhibit in Fart (Fashion and Art) Gallery, features Gissele Bautista, Lesley Lim, Derek Tumala and Julius Sebastian. All former students of the College of Fine Arts and Design of the University of Santo Tomas, these four artists inject their commercial professions—advertising art director, graphic artist, Web designer, and layout artist for a publishing house—into art. The exhibit is at once bold and accessible. "Urban Kaleidoscpe" opens on May 25 in Fart Gallery, K-D St. cor. K-1st , Kamuning Road, QC. Call 09267063304.



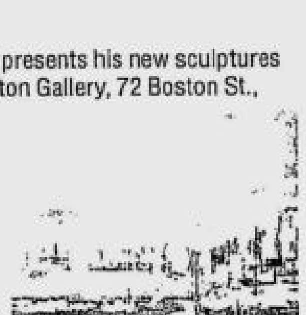
"BETWEEN the Lines," by Dopy Doplon

Doplon at One Workshop Gallery

"Creation," an exhibit featuring renowned graphic designer Francisco Dopy Doplon, will be on view in One Workshop Gallery, 2241 La Fuerza Plaza II, Sabio St. cor. Don Chino Roces Ave., Makati, May 25-June 25. The exhibit features digital artworks: simple abstractions, an experimental digression from the usual digital fine art that Doplon is known for. His new series of abstractions takes advantage of light and colors making the pieces versatile and flexible for any home and office interior.

New at Boston Gallery

Award-winning sculptor Jan Leeroy New presents his new sculptures in "Santo-santohan," until May 30 in Boston Gallery, 72 Boston St., Cubao, QC. The title alludes to a contrived interpretation of the *santo*. Call 7229205 or visit www.thebostongallery.com.



"CORNWALL," by Rafael Cusi

Cusi in London exhibit

Award-winning Filipino watercolorist Rafael Cusi showcases his recent series of paintings in a week-long solo exhibit in Such Gallery in Cornwall, London, starting May 22. Cusi presents seascapes inspired by the marina and beaches of Cornwall. The exhibit is organized and presented by Britania Art Projects. Call 0917-8070327 or e-mail britania.artprojects@ gmail.com.

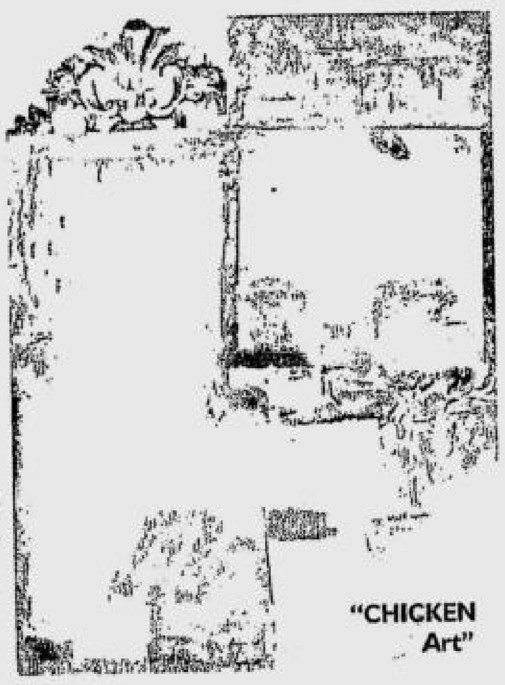
Traveling exhibit at Ayala Museum

The Alliance Française de Manille, French Embassy and Ayala Museum present "Objectif Paris," until June 27, in the ground-floor gallery of Ayala Museum. "Objectif Paris" is part of this year's celebration of French Spring in Manila 2007. Call 7577117 to 21 local 28.

'Chinese Diaspora' at the Ayala

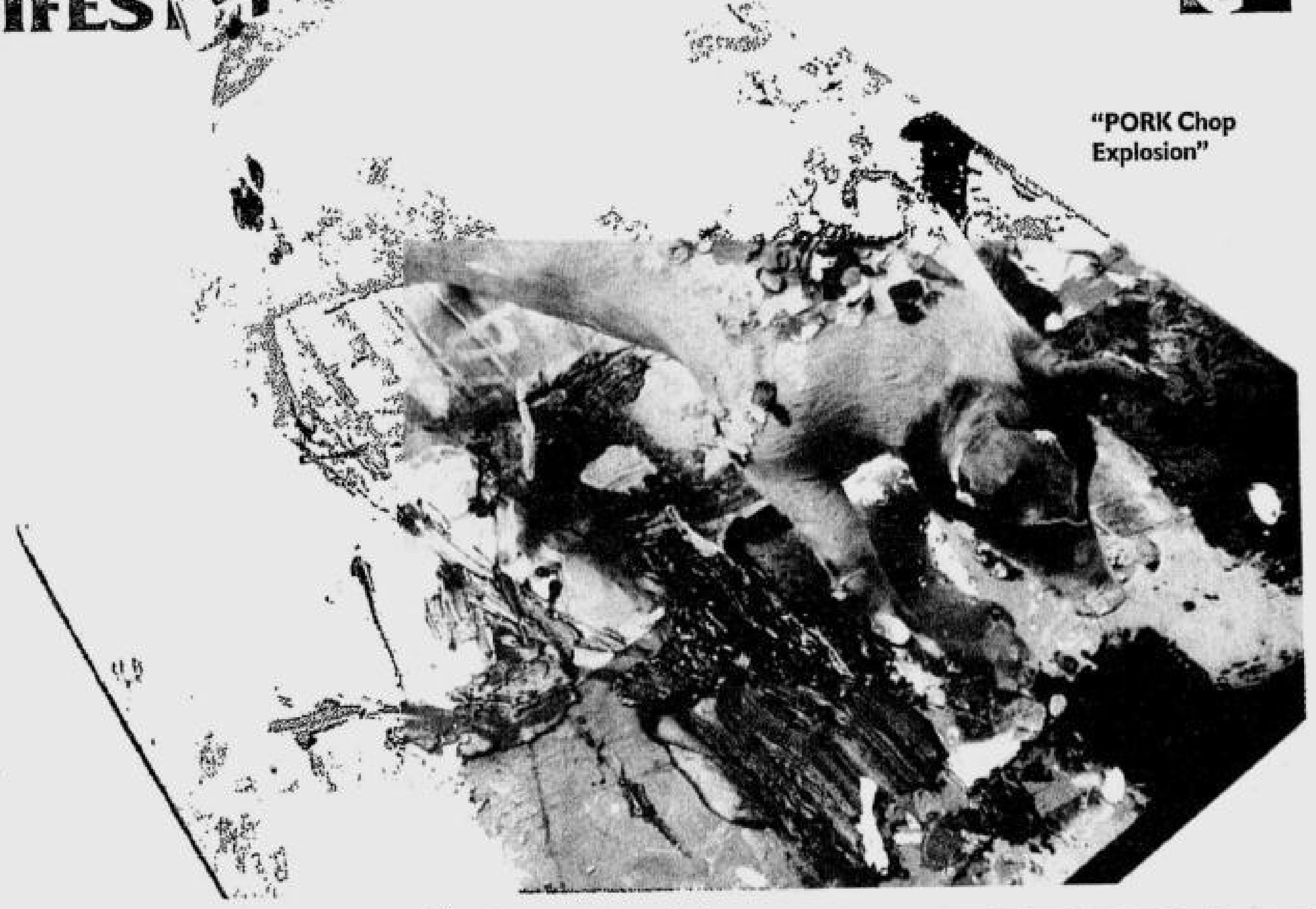
"Chinese Diaspora: Art Streams from the Mainland" is on its last month run at Ayala Museum. Ongoing until May 27, the collection consists of six exhibits that address the theme of Chinese influence and its local transformations in Southeast Asia. Call 7577117 local 28 or 0917-8594237.

Lindslee's animal farm



"CHICKEN Art"

The other works are pure mixed-media abstraction that builds on Lindslee's old strengths in composition, color contradistinction and scale



"PORK Chop Explosion"

By Lito B. Zulueta

THE ABSTRACTION OF LINDSLEE takes a figurative turn in a nonfigurative, that is, very literal, fashion in "Animan," opening May 26 at The Drawing Room.

The show consists of Lindslee's standard mixed media, but this time, the media consist not only of paint and scrap but also of sculpture and taxidermy. The last is a new development in Lindslee's art, providing a counterpoint and a critique to the abstraction.

In the taxidermal works, animals are placed in certain situations that are said to depict the human situation. In the installation "Sleep for Sale," a swan-white duck sits on a white pillow that rests on a dark-colored board or platform. The fowl's whiteness is broken by splotches of Lindslee's usual industrial colors; her feathers are ruffled in some parts, with a few quill-like feathers strewn about.

The whiteness may refer to the beauty of dreams (dreams may be described poetically as a flight with swans) while the colors may conjure the drabness of life.

So why should sleep be for sale? Perhaps because in the hurly-burly of assembly-line existence, with its deadline and stress, sleep may yet be the scarcest commodity, the one singular luxury.

The poultry allegory is extended to piggery in "Pork Chop Explosion," in which a pig stands above a painting of Lindslee with some of the colors on its hooves, snout, hinds and back. The gesture of the swine makes it appear busily finishing the painting, like Pollock dripping paint on his canvas.

We don't know if the artist here is recognizing the incidental artistry of animals (like Thai elephants painting on a board) or depicting the animal instinct that sometimes drives the artistic process.

Industrial critique

But to extend the industrial critique and the metaphor on domesticated animals, the artist may be saying the art business has made swine of some artists, battening on the high stakes of the industry, but not realizing they have been domesticated by the art market.

In this sense, the wild colors of the Fauvists, for example, do not really symbolize defiance of established conventions but co-optation. Artistic subversion has become cultivated, like developers reclaiming the wilds. Artists have become fattened pigs.

The critique seems to have been expanded in "Chicken Art," in which a chick stands in the middle of a mixed media on canvas, its beak pointed down to the right end of the painting where there's a sculpture of a fleur-de-lis.

The title connotes the art of the faint-hearted and the small-minded, embodied by the puny chick that can only stand mute and helpless at the artistic flowering below. Of course, the fleur-de-lis may also be the "chicken art" itself, an artistic convention and a shop-worn cliché that the chick may either aspire for or look down on.

The other works are pure mixed-media abstraction that builds on Lindslee's old strengths in composition, color contradistinction and scale (the dimensions are at 5x5, 4x8 or 5x8 ft). Some of the works are titled "Abstraction," as if to complement the taxidermal-sculptural installation paintings.

Tangible figures

The addition of tangible figures to the abstract works enhances the critique of abstraction: that while abstraction seeks to achieve a purity of art that is wordless and narrativeless, of which the most supreme example is music, the formalist absolutism is exposed as futile or impossible by the tangibility and solidity of the world that art seeks to depict.

Seeking to achieve a purity of art, abstraction settles for indeterminacy.

The taxidermy easily invokes the combine works of Rauschenberg, the most famous of which is perhaps "Monogram" (1955-59, now with the Stockholm Moderne Museum), in which a stuffed goat with a rubber tire around its middle is splashed with paint much like Action painting.

Together with Jasper Johns, Rauschenberg signaled the move away from Abstract Expressionism, and that signal Lindslee seems to have taken much to heart in his new works.

Lindslee's "Animan" opens May 26, 4:30 p.m., at The Drawing Room (Metrostar Bldg., 1007 Metropolitan Ave., Makati City). It runs until June 16. Call 8977877 and 8976990.

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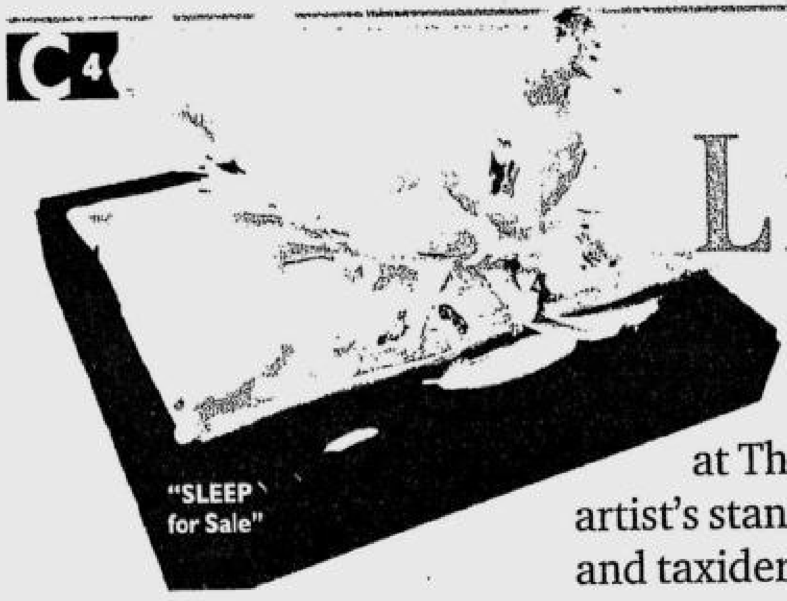
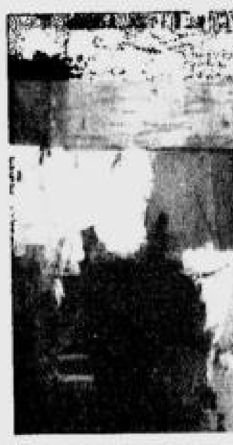


"SLEEP for Sale"

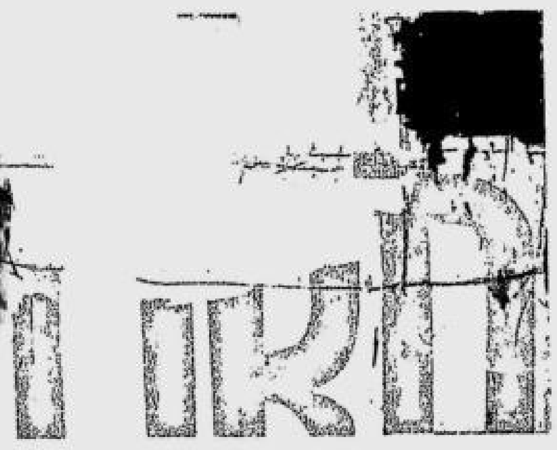
Lindslee's animal farm

'Animan,' opening on May 26 at The Drawing Room, consists of the artist's standard mixed media, with sculpture and taxidermy as counterpoint

STORY ON PAGE C3



"ABSTRACTION"



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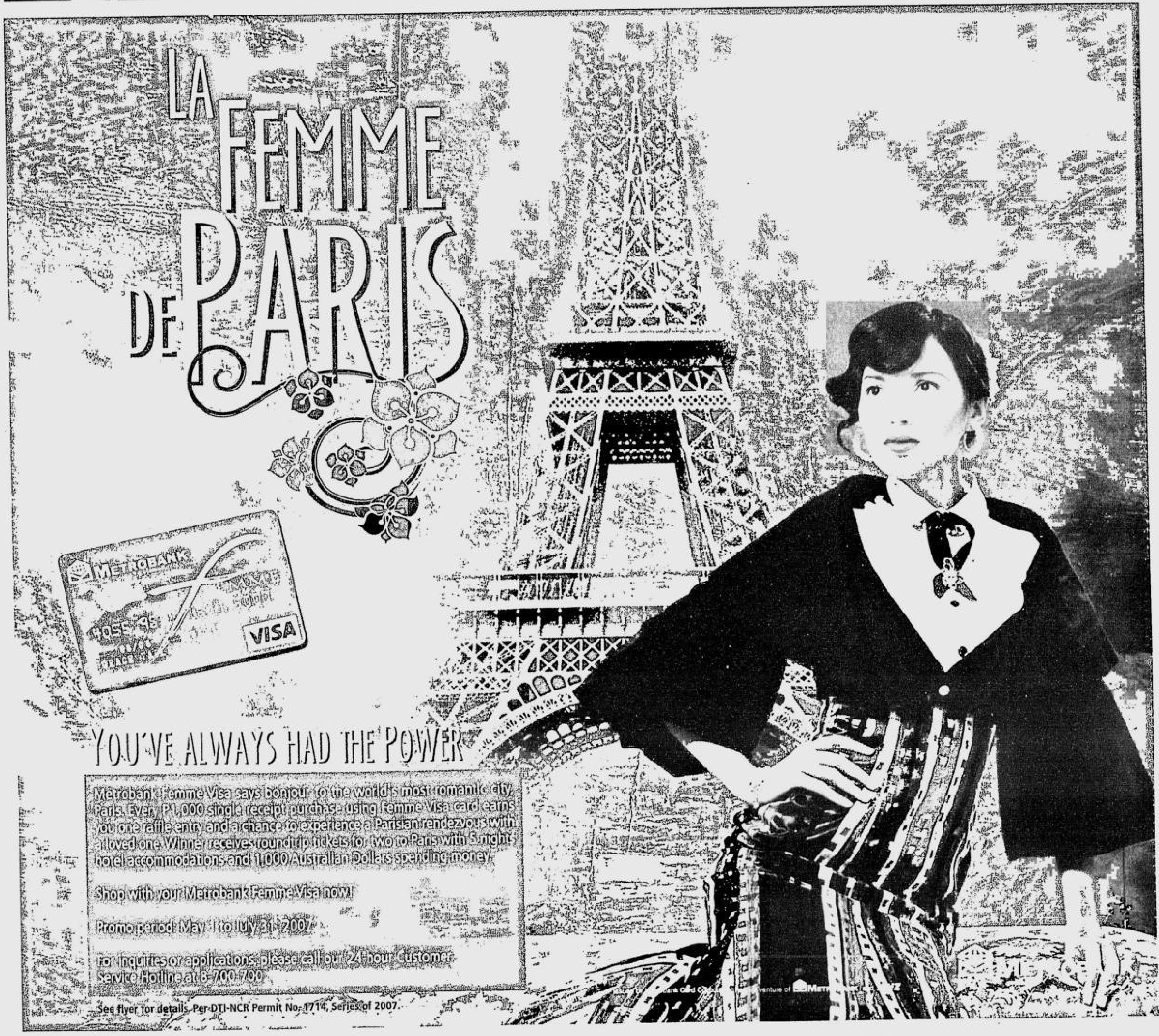
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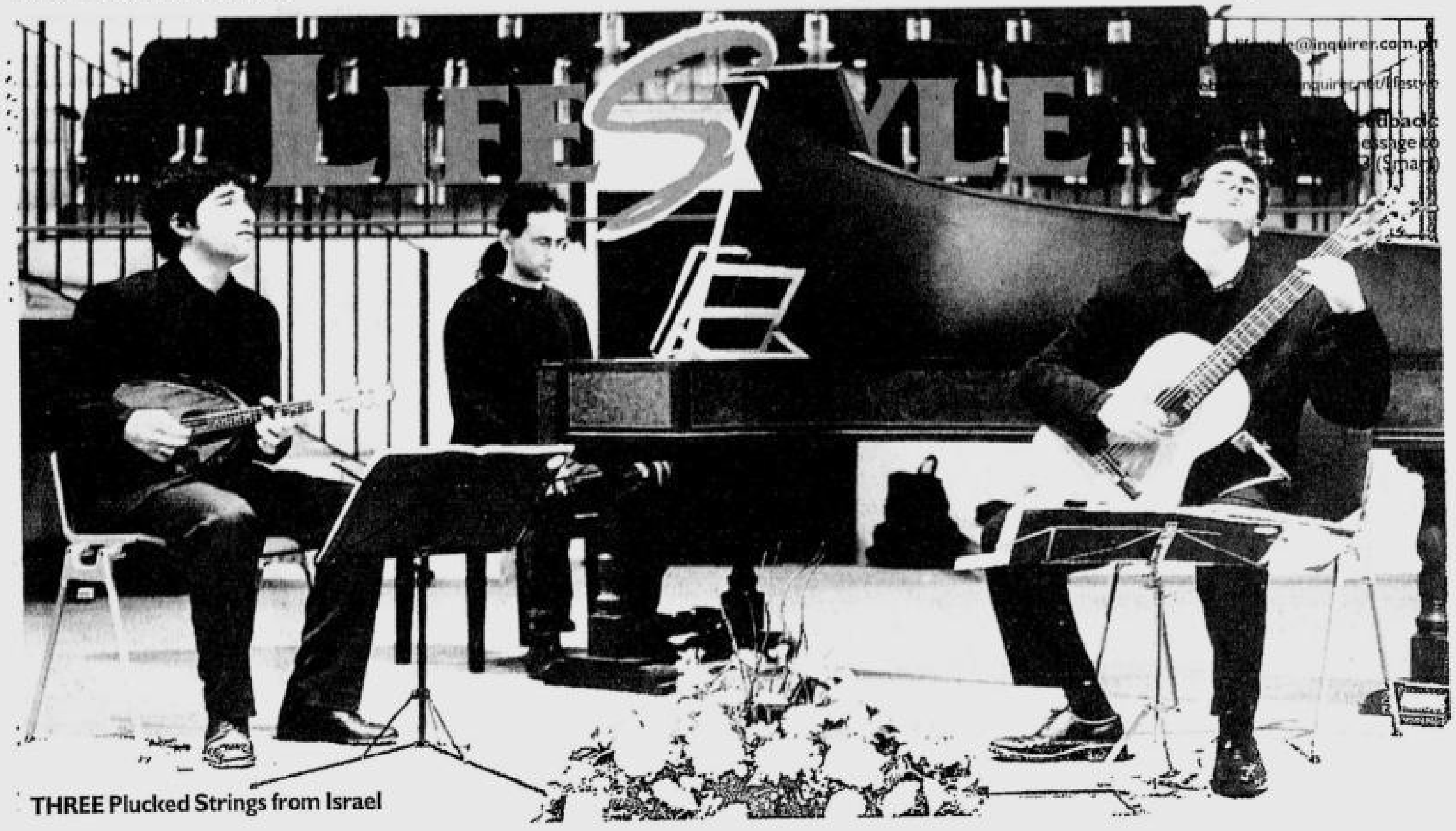

THREE Plucked Strings from Israel

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Cultural awakening in Dumaguete

By Ian Rosales Casocot
Contributor

IN ACKNOWLEDGING THE standing ovation that greeted them at the height of the Second International Rondalla Festival in Dumaguete City's Claire Isabel McGill Luce Auditorium, Yuval Avital of Three Plucked Strings had this to say to the audience, "You live in paradise."

It was more than a nod to the southern beaches and clear blue skies for the acclaimed Israeli musician and composer. There's something to be said about the sudden explosion of things cultural in Dumaguete over the past few weeks.

This is a city trying to recapture the mantle of being the preeminent Cultural Center of the South—a title which it seemed to be on the brink of losing to neighboring Cebu. For the longest time, Dumaguete culture was mostly choral concerts, tired Broadway musicals, or parades with *artistas*.

But there has always been a culture of the artistic kind in Dumaguete, which is home to two National Artists: Edith Tiempo for Literature and Eddie Romero for Film. In the early days of Silliman University, at the turn of the last century, Shakespearean plays were regular (and much-attended) fare in the old amphitheater, and an impressive string of internationally renowned performers—imagine Le Grand Ballet Classique de France dancing in an old hangar-turned-gymnasium—had enriched Dumaguete's small-town life.

When the Luce Auditorium, a gift of Time magazine founder Henry Luce III, was finished in 1975, it ushered a cultural gold rush, prompting even Luce to pointedly announce in the New York Times in 2000 that it was "the best performance space in the Philippines outside of Manila."

Enviable cultural climate

True enough, the Luce stage—and Dumaguete's enviable cultural climate (with taskmasters such as art connoisseur Albert Faurot, writers Edilberto and Edith Tiempo, ethnomusicologist Priscilla Magdamo Abraham, and dancer Luz Jumawan seeding long-lasting traditions)—has prodded the rise to prominence of local artists such as Junix Inocian, who would become The Engineer in "Miss Saigon;" Portal Players founder Amiel Leonardia; violinist Gilopez Kabayao; and Paul Pfeiffer, now the toast of international contemporary art, the inaugural recipient of the Bucksbaum Award given by the Whitney Museum of American Art. And these are only a few names.

The Luce stage, too, has seen the likes of Cecile Licad, Nicole Delannoy, German violinist Denes Zsigmondy, American soprano Julia Finch, German harpsichordist Wilhelm Krumbach, Swiss pianist Nicole Wickihalder, violinist Stanley Plummer, Ballet Manila, Repertory Philippines, Bayanihan, Ballet Philippines and Dulaang UP perform for an increasingly discriminating Dumaguete audience, whose cultural education may be one of the best in the country.

And rightly so: at subsidized rates courtesy of Silliman's Cultural Affairs Committee, a typical P500-P1,000 ticket price for a show by a major performing company in, say, the Cultural Center of the Philippines, can be had for as less as P150 in the Luce. In Dumaguete, culture is a steal.

But for the past five years—save for occasional gems such as the animé parade of Nihon Eiga Sai in 2001 and a controversial staging of Eve Ensler's "The Vagina Monologues" by the New Voice Company in 2003—there was a slow-burning downturn, perhaps caused by the malaise of Sept. 11.

And yet, for the moment, the arts—music, dance, painting, film, literature—seem to have found haven in a singular place: Wake up in Dumaguete these days, and always

CULTURAL/ D2

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Awesome pianism wows audience

Russian pianist Sergey Kuznetsov's recent recital was marked by virtuoso playing, technical prowess and exquisite artistry

By Antonio C. Hila
Contributor

RUSSIAN PIANIST SERGEY KUZNETSOV awed Manila's audience with a marvelous recital recently at Philamlife Theater.

It does not take long to listen to Kuznetsov to recognize that he is a world-class pianist, in the tradition of grand pianism.

First is the quality of sound he carved from the keyboard. Russians are known for their enviable sound—robust and lush, with rich colors and touches. Its bigness is brought about by a well-crafted technique that allows the sound to project with sterling timbre.

With least effort, the sound comes out with a symphonic sonority capable of filling up the hall. The allure in this kind of performance does not depend on the pianist's facial expression or choreographic movement, which are often done to visually enhance sound production.

Kusnetsov ably demonstrated that bodily movements have no bearing at all in producing his vibrant and dynamic sound. His vibrancy and dynamism were the result of a well-honed technique, rather than choreographic mannerisms that at times could become mere distractions.

Such a performance is not, however, just marked by this big "Russian sound." It is not at all a tyranny of hugeness, but a playing tempered by a singing touch made more appealing by a legate line, an articulate voicing of chords, or a fine blending of the notes, plus a kind of broad dynamics used to define the particular mood of each piece.

The ability of the pianist to connect with the piece he's playing is also a big factor. Here, his artistic imagination and musical understanding are summoned.

Such imagination must be based and focused on an understanding of the stylistic requirements of the pieces, to clearly recreate the spirit or image of the particular stylistic period represented by the composer's work.

Kuznetsov brought out all these points in his playing. He kept the audience at the edge of their seats, so to speak, with his virtuoso playing, marked by technical prowess and exquisite artistry.

Legate—singing lines—were in abundance in the two-movement Beethoven work, the Sonata in E Minor, Op. 90. Strict command and poetic charisma towered in Tchaikovsky's Scherzo Humoristique, Op. 19, No. 2; and "Meditation" from Eighteen Pieces, Op. 72, respectively.

He combined sensitive lyricism, acute tonal balance in voicing, and incisive rhythmical drive to bring out the arresting beauty of Ravel's "Gaspard de la nuit." That masculine touch made listening to his playing a truly fine, exhilarating experience.

Utmost virtuosity rode high in the works of Scriabin and Chopin, two sonatas of demanding pianism.

It was more in the latter's work, the third sonata of Chopin, Sonata in B Minor, Op. 58, where Kuznetsov showed his firm grasp of technique, but still in service to his interpretative genius. He amply showed this in the finale, which he played with exciting dispatch.

All told, the local recital of Kuznetsov was a milestone musical event. For bringing over this awesome pianist, Music News and Features deserves hearty praise and good wishes for its future presentations.

California-based tenor performs at Meralco

SAL MALAKI

LIKE MANY GIFTED FILIPINOS in the classical field forced by circumstances to pursue their careers abroad, California-based tenor Sal Malaki has always welcomed opportunities to perform in his homeland. For him, there is nothing like the applause and appreciation of a Filipino audience.

Malaki returns to Manila in "Le Concert Classique," presented by PLDT and produced by VIMA Concerts with production management by Manila Star Caravan, on July 27, 8 p.m., at the Meralco Theater.

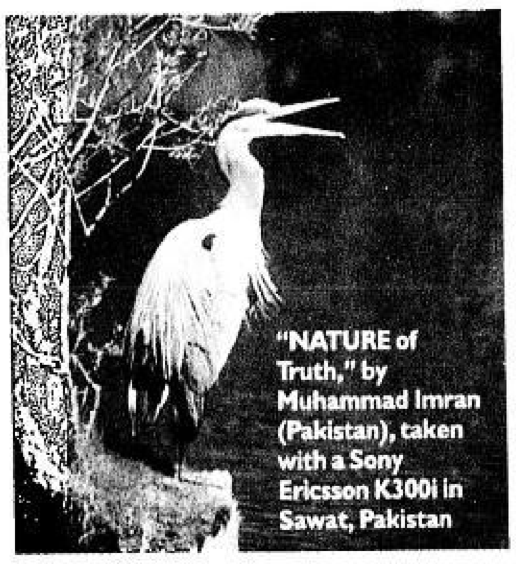
A graduate of the University of the Philippines College of Music with majors in Voice and Flute, Malaki was in the faculty of the College, member and tenor soloist of the Philippine Madrigal Singers prior to leaving for abroad.

He has appeared in over 50 productions of the Los Angeles Opera and the Los Angeles Master Chorale since 1995, and has held major concerts in New York at Carnegie Hall's Weil Recital Hall and Merkin Concert Hall, Royce Hall at UCLA, Morristown Museum in New Jersey, among others; appeared in operas at the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion in Los Angeles; was part of a command performance at the Philippine Ambassador's residence in Washington, DC, to mark the celebration of the Philippine Centennial in 1998; and was honored with an Award of Excellence in Music from the Philippine Tri-Media Group of Companies at the Los Angeles Convention Center during the 102nd Philippine Independence Celebration.

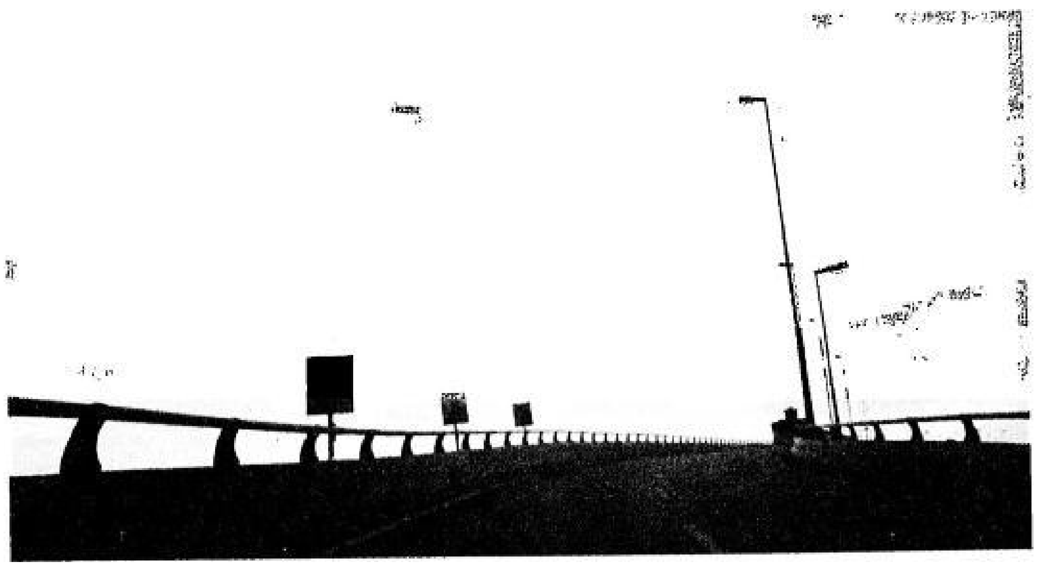
In the Philippines, Malaki has appeared at the CCP in the operas "La Boheme," "La Loba Negra," and "Noli Me Tangere"; was tenor soloist in Beethoven's Ninth Symphony and "Missa Solemnis," Saint Saens' "Christmas Oratorio," and Orff's "Carmina Burana." He has also joined the Philippine Opera Company's "An Evening with Puccini" (directed by Floy Quintos) featuring excerpts from the composer's great operas: "La Boheme," "Madame Butterfly," "Tosca" and "Turandot."

He also sings the role of Juan Luna in a CD recording of "Spolarium," the opera on the tragic life of the great Filipino artist, written by Ryan Cayabyab and Fides Cuyugan-Asensio, with the San Miguel Philharmonic Orchestra and the San Miguel Master Chorale.

"Le Concert Classique" will have as guests soprano Rachelle Gerodias and violinist Joseph Valdes of the Pundaquit Virtuosi string ensemble of Coke Bolipata. Conductor and musical director of the RSVP string ensemble is Ma. Carmen Echevarria. For inquiries on tickets, call 4531173 or 9285462.



"NATURE of Truth," by Muhammad Imran (Pakistan), taken with a Sony Ericsson K300i in Sawat, Pakistan



"SILVER Lining," by Amy Koh (Malaysia), taken with a Sony Ericsson W810i Walkman at Bandar Sunway, Malaysia

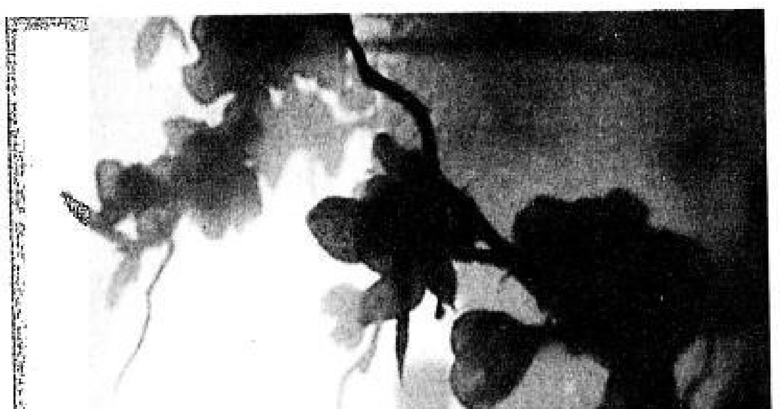
Award-winning images and the phone cams behind them

IMAGES TAKEN WITH A VARIETY OF SONY Ericsson phones were among the top winners of Windows Into Asia, a joint promotional campaign of the National Geographic Channel (NGC) and Sony Ericsson.

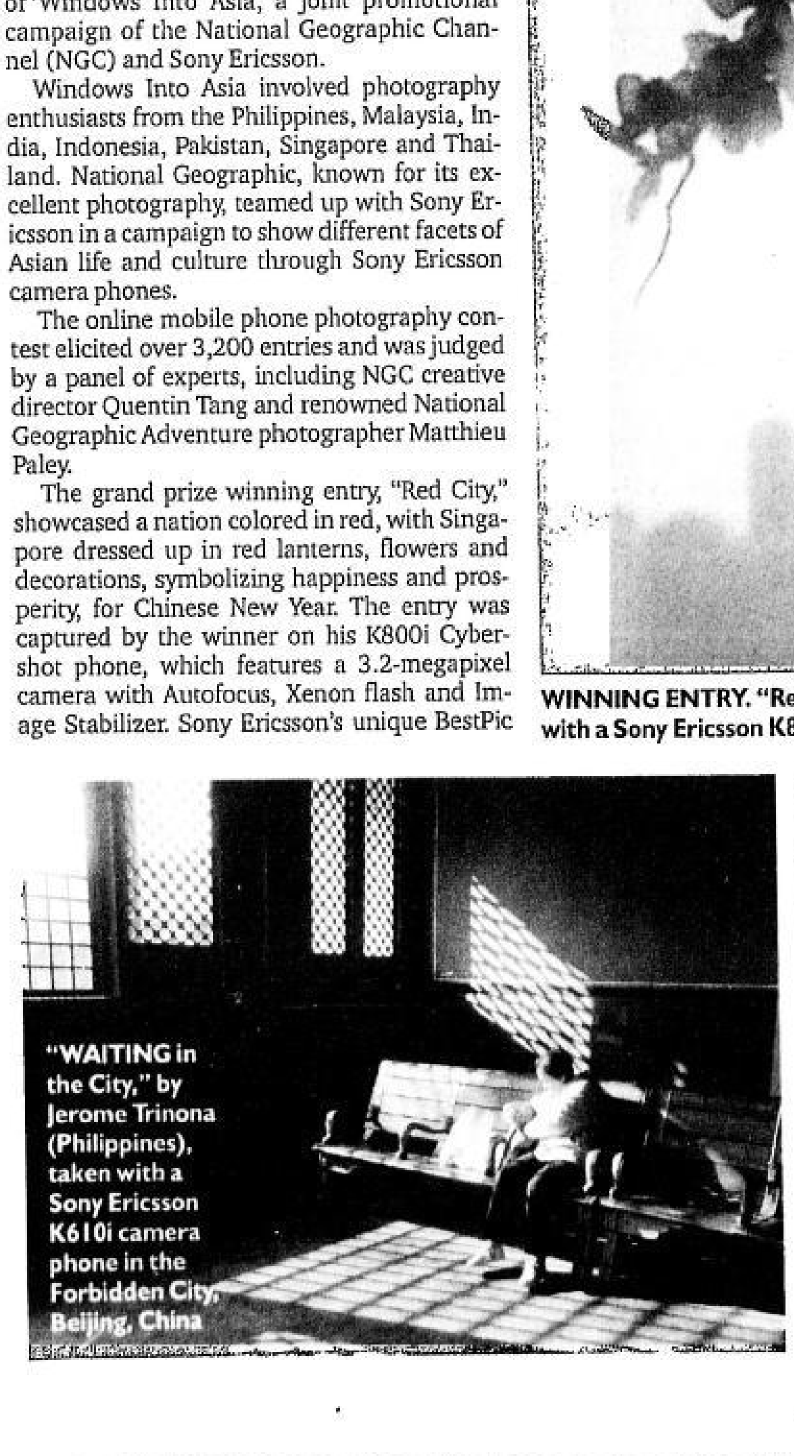
Windows Into Asia involved photography enthusiasts from the Philippines, Malaysia, India, Indonesia, Pakistan, Singapore and Thailand. National Geographic, known for its excellent photography, teamed up with Sony Ericsson in a campaign to show different facets of Asian life and culture through Sony Ericsson camera phones.

The online mobile phone photography contest elicited over 3,200 entries and was judged by a panel of experts, including NGC creative director Quentin Tang and renowned National Geographic Adventure photographer Matthieu Paley.

The grand prize winning entry, "Red City," showcased a nation colored in red, with Singapore dressed up in red lanterns, flowers and decorations, symbolizing happiness and prosperity, for Chinese New Year. The entry was captured by the winner on his K800i Cybershot phone, which features a 3.2-megapixel camera with Autofocus, Xenon flash and Image Stabilizer. Sony Ericsson's unique BestPic technology debuts in this pioneering model in the Cyber-shot line of phones. The feature lets one capture the precise moment you want—four images as you press the button and another four images afterwards for a total of 9 images to choose from.



WINNING ENTRY. "Red City," by Stefanus Eliot (Singapore), taken with a Sony Ericsson K800i



"WAITING in the City," by Jerome Trinona (Philippines), taken with a Sony Ericsson K610i camera phone in the Forbidden City, Beijing, China

The K800i was also declared this year's Best 3GSM Handset at the GSM Association Global Mobile Awards in Barcelona. The accolade was bestowed on the phone for its excellence in quality image capture and fast and easy share-and-transfer features.

The Sony Ericsson K750i camera phone, awarded Best Mobile Imaging Device by the Technical Image Press Association, had the most number of entries with 579 images. Colorful and beautiful winning shots from the Philippines, India, Thailand and Singapore were taken with its 2.0-megapixel camera with auto focus. The Sony Ericsson K700i, the fashionable still and video imaging phone, also emerged as one of the most-used phone models in the contest.

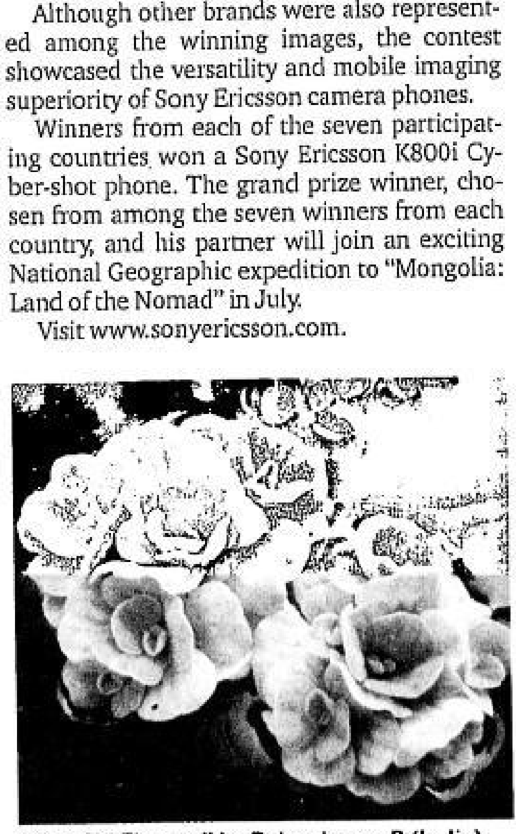
Superb picture quality was captured by other phone models in the Sony Ericsson K-series of camera phones. "Waiting in the City", a photo of a woman taken in the Forbidden City in China, submitted by Jerome Trinona of the Philippines using the Sony Ericsson K610i, emerged as one of the winners from the Philippines. This slim 3G phone model offers a 2.0-megapixel camera and video recording.

More than 5,000 dancers swaying in Bali's Kecak Dance are depicted in the winning photo by Made Nagi, taken with the Sony Ericsson K300i camera phone. Salman Khalid took the dazzling "Karachi at Night" photo with his Sony Ericsson K310i camera phone.

Although other brands were also represented among the winning images, the contest showcased the versatility and mobile imaging superiority of Sony Ericsson camera phones.

Winners from each of the seven participating countries won a Sony Ericsson K800i Cyber-shot phone. The grand prize winner, chosen from among the seven winners from each country, and his partner will join an exciting National Geographic expedition to "Mongolia: Land of the Nomad" in July.

Visit www.sonyericsson.com.



"GREEN Flower," by Rajasekaran P (India), taken with a Sony Ericsson W810i Walkman phone in Chennai, India

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Cultural awakening . . .

From page D1

there is something to keep anyone's cultural calendar filled up. It may have started last September when Foundation University unleashed the Philippine Philharmonic Orchestra as its initial offering for the cultural season at Sofia Soler Hall; continuing on to an increasingly worthwhile Buglasan Festival; and straight on to the tribute for National Artist Tiempo last February.

Rondalla festival

Recently, four international acts—the Silay Kabataang Ensemble, Silliman's Kwerdas, Russia's Quartette Phoenix, and Israel's Three Plucked Strings—gave a varied sampling of rondalla music to a packed Luce Auditorium. It was, to be sure, a resounding success. The concert, billed as One: Cuerdas sa Panaghiusa, found an audience grateful for the string renditions by the Negrense troupes of traditional melodies (and some delightful non-traditional ones as well, including a rondalla version of Koji Kondo's "Super Mario Brothers" computer-game soundtrack).

It was mostly an evening for discovering-cerebrally and emotionally-world music. Three Plucked Strings' conceptual musical energy was, in turns, affecting and disturbing, from the more traditional "Jewish Klezmer Suite" by Zeev Bitkin to the playful "CODA" by Vyacheslav Ganelin to the strangely hypnotic "Dark City Alleys" which the trio played with Kwerdas as a soundtrack of sorts to a projected 10-minute film of a walk through the dark byways of an Israeli city.

There was bright comic folksiness in Quartette Phoenix's rendition of the traditional American melody "El Cumbanchero" (done in bluegrass style), and Vasily Parhomenko's "Block-Fox." At the end of their repertoire, the Russian musicians brought the entire auditorium to a standing ovation.

Beyond string music, there is also the independent filmmaking forum with director Emmanuel dela Cruz and producer Raymond Lee, two cinematic voices responsible for two of the most acclaimed Filipino films in recent years: Sarong Banggi (directed by Dela Cruz), and Ang Pagdadalaga ni Maximo Oliveros (directed by Aureus Solito).

The University of the Philippines Dance Company also performed with Silliman's Kahayag Dance Troupe in a dance concert titled Sayaw Pagtagbo. The Philippine Madrigal Singers also performed in Dumaguete as part of the national outreach tour of "Tara Na! MADZitawanan Na!"

The Second Terracotta Biennial and Arts Festival will unfold this summer.

Meanwhile, Silliman is currently hosting the Dumaguete National Writers Workshop—the oldest creative writing workshop in Asia.

Finally, a cultural avalanche in Dumaguete? That seems to be the case.

Flamenco at the mall

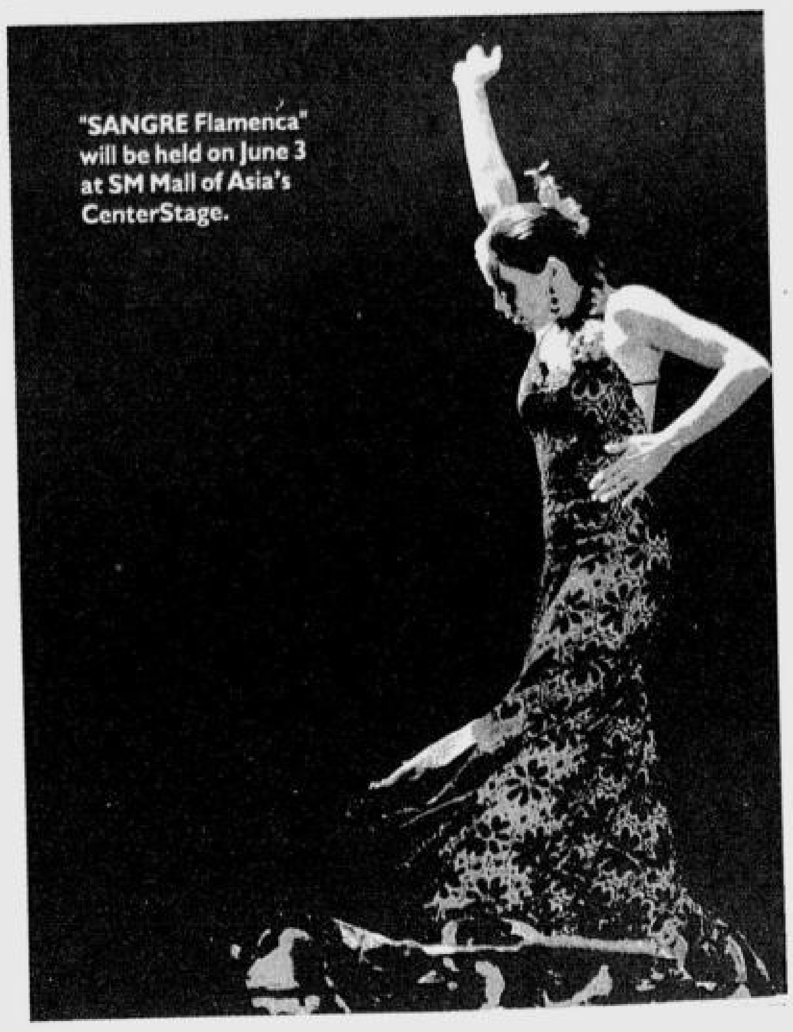
WORLD-RENOWNED FLAMENCO artist Clara Ramona presents the universality of flamenco in "Sangre Flamenca," a theatrical production showcasing the acclaimed dancer's original choreographic pieces.

The show, to be held on June 3 at SM Mall of Asia's CenterStage, will combine both the exotic and the familiar in an effort to translate the virtuosity of flamenco and Spanish dance into a deep and vital human experience for the audience.

The repertoire will attempt to define the heritage that binds Filipinos to the ancient Spanish art form by way of theatricalized music, song and dance. "Inspiración Danza Flamenca" for instance, feature choreography that underscores the Spanish dance's expressive range through movement and dramatic interpretation. The show will also feature authentic live music from Yerbaguena.

Call 891-9999 or visit www.ticketworld.com.ph. Tickets are also available at selected National Bookstore branches, selected major Robinsons Department Store, Music One (Makati and Alabang), and Ayala Malls (Greenbelt I/Glorietta I).

Visit the Clara Ramona Centro de Danza Flamenca studio located at 5917 Algier St., Poblacion, Makati City (parallel to Rockwell Drive, call 899-1346/0915-4345789, email info@clararamona.com or visit www.clararamona.com.


"SANGRE Flamenca" will be held on June 3 at SM Mall of Asia's CenterStage.

Graçe Nono concert as workshop showcase

"TINIG," A LIVE CONCERT PERFORmance of Grace Nono on June 2, 3 p.m. and 8 p.m. at the Peta Theater Center, will offer sacred chants and intimations by the internationally-renowned music artist, teacher, researcher and cultural worker. Parts of her repertoire were premiered in 2006 in Monte Carlo, New York and Los Angeles for international and Filipino audiences.

Nono's concert will also serve as the showcase production of the lights and sound design workshops to be conducted by Sinag Arts Studio.

The "Awareness of Light" workshop is a week-long master class workshop on lights design facilitated Naomi "Shoko" Matsumoto, one of the countries leading lights craftsmen for theater. The workshop will run at the Sinag Arts Studio May 21-27, 10 a.m.-9 p.m. The lighting workshop will be very useful to anybody working with lights, such as architects, photographers, interior designers, set designers, and aspiring light designers for theater and dance productions. Rate is P8,000 inclusive of materials and two meals.

"Soundscape," meanwhile is an "Awareness Workshop on Basic Sound for Live Performances." The three-day basic sound design course conducted by top sound engineer Jethro Joaquin will run May 21, 24 and 26 at Sinag Arts Studio, 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Rate is P3,000 inclusive of lunch and materials.

Nono's "Tinig" concert will be the final culminating activity of the workshop participants. Tickets prices at P1,000, P800 and P400.

Visit the Sinag Arts Office at 664 San Ignacio St., Barangay Plainview, Mandaluyong. Call 531-3491 or 891-9999; or Peta at 725-6244/410-0822/721-8604. E-mail admin@sinag-arts.org or visit http://www.sinag-arts.org.

Grant writing and advocacy workshops

NEED RESOURCES FOR YOUR ORGANIZAtion to stay alive? How about letting the world know that your organization exists and needs public support?

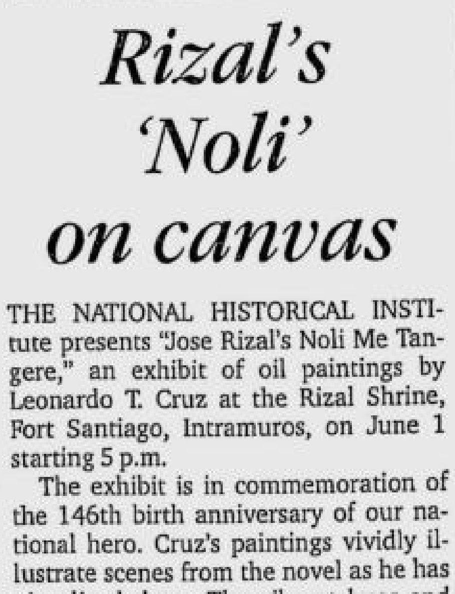
A grant writing workshop will be held on May 30 at the Ortigas Library covering research techniques, elements of a proposal, writing style and successful pitches that ensure winning proposals. A writing exercise is included.

An organization needs to distinguish itself from the rest and presents its points convincingly and gains constituents. On May 31, an advocacy writing workshop will be held at the Ortigas Library covering the elements of a powerful news article, samples of persuasive advocacy pieces and securing publicity.

Both whole-day workshops will be led by John L. Silva, a professional fund-raiser and advocacy writer for various local and international publications.

Workshops are at P2,000 each, starting 9 a.m. and ending 5 p.m. The Ortigas Library is at 2/F Ortigas Building located at the corner of Meralco and Ortigas Avenues in Pasig. E-mail jsilva79@mac.com or call/text 0926-7299029.

For more detailed information about both workshops, visit blogsite http://johnsilva.blogspot.com/2007/01/advocacy-and-grant-writing-seminars.html.



Rizal's 'Noli' on canvas

THE NATIONAL HISTORICAL INSTITUTE presents "Jose Rizal's Noli Me Tangere," an exhibit of oil paintings by Leonardo T. Cruz at the Rizal Shrine, Fort Santiago, Intramuros, on June 1 starting 5 p.m.

The exhibit is in commemoration of the 146th birth anniversary of our national hero. Cruz's paintings vividly illustrate scenes from the novel as he has visualized them. The vibrant hues and intricate brush strokes capture the artist's feelings arising from the scenes. Cruz's works are a celebration of the richness of our cultural heritage.

The artist has held several one-man shows and participated in a number of group shows as well as in other notable exhibits such as the 1st International Exhibition of Watercolor Paintings held in China in 1991.

Call 524-9925, 523-1039 or 362-1675. E-mail leonardotcruz@gmail.com or evelync@asiatype.com

Mr. & Ms. Bikini Bodies 2007
Carlito Rosadiño Jr.
(Pasay Road) and
Christia Flores (Adriatico)

SLIMMERS WORLD

Making Fit Bodies for Bikinis: Slimmers World Bikini Bodies 2007

Holding true to its stellar reputation as the country's leading fitness center specializing in health, fitness, slimming and beauty, Slimmers World International held its annual BIKINI BODIES competition at the One Esplanade, SM Central Business Park Seaside last May 5, 2007.

Twenty-six candidates from all over 13 branches of Slimmers World International competed for the most coveted title of Mr. & Ms. Bikini Bodies, which is undoubtedly the most popular title every summer. Unlike other competitions where the focus is on musculature, Mr. & Ms. Bikini Bodies emphasizes the contestants' over-all appearance in swimwear form, in true summer flavor and in time for the summer heat.

Both the Mr. and Ms. Bikini Bodies winners each took home the grand prize of PhP 25,000 in cash and a round trip ticket to Boracay for two with a 3-day stay at the peaceful and tranquil Escondido Beach Resort. The winners are:
Mr. & Ms. Bikini Bodies –
Carlito Rosadiño Jr. (Pasay Road) &
Christia Flores (Adriatico)
1st Runners-up –
Dominique de Vera (Alabang) &
Mary Masamayor (Legaspi)
2nd Runners-up –
Manuel Joseph Sanchez (Binondo) &
Jolaida Niccolai Peña (Pasig).
Among the minor awards were Mr. & Ms. Great Skin by Slimmers Face & Skin Clinics which were awarded to Carlito Rosadiño and Jolaida Niccolai Peña, Framedshots, the official photographer of the event chose Dominique De Vera & Jolaida Niccolai Peña as Mr. & Ms. Photogenic, while Ruthelyn Jagodilla earned the title of Best in Swimwear courtesy of Tomato. Other special awards were Mr. & Ms. Personality by John Robert Powers given to Manuel Joseph Sanchez and Mary Masamayor, Christia Flores bagged the Ms. Goody Body Beautiful award, Mr. & Ms. Wendy's Healthy Body won by Dominique de Vera and Jolaida Niccolai Peña, Mr. & Ms. Nesvita Pro-Weight Management awarded to Manuel Joseph Sanchez and Suzette Delos Santos, Mr. & Ms. Berocca were given to Carlito Rosadiño Jr. and Jackie-Lynn Orpiano, Ms. Lactacyd was given to Sheena Camille Tan, Mr. & Ms. Armani Choice Award won by Carlito Rosadiño and Suzette Delos Santos, and last of all, Dominique de Vera & Suzette Delos Santos both earned the awards from Klassno Sugarfree Coffee & Coppertone Sports Sunblock.

To add glitter and glam to the bolstering crowd of 2,000 that filled the One Esplanade, celebrities and prominent personalities formed the panel of judges: Ronald Joseph Moy, President of Slimmers World International, Helen Manansala-Camacho, Slimmers World's Vice-President, Alice Lacson, better half of Senator Panfilo Lacson, Butch Francisco of Star Talk, Pepito Olarte, Executive Vice-President of the Philippine Daily Inquirer, Jodi Sta. Maria of ABS-CBN's Walang Kapalit, and the reigning Miss Philippines-Fire & Miss Philippines-Ecotourism, Sarah Katrina Miñoza and Anna Katrina Bautista.

The competition concretely expresses Slimmers World's vision, the unending quest of developing the human form to perfection through good health and fitness.

Slimmers World boasts of over 28 years of experience in fitness, health and beauty service. Presently, eleven centers in Metro Manila, one center each in Subic and Cebu cater to the fitness and beauty needs of over 400,000 clients from all walks of life.

Slimmers World Bikini Bodies 2007 is presented by SEAIR, COPPERTONE, DOLE JUICE SINGLES, LACTACYD FEMININE WASH, ARMANI PRODUCTIONS, ESCONDIDO BEACH RESORT, TOMATO, KLASSNO SUGARFREE COFFEE, BEROCCA, JUNGLE BRONZE TANNING SPRAY, RUSH FITNESS WATER, BULLFIGHTER, WENDY'S HAMBURGER, JOSIAH'S CATERING, JOHN ROBERT POWERS, NESVITA PRO-WEIGHT MANAGEMENT, GREPALIFE, GOODY STAYPUT, JIMINI PIZZA, COUNTRYSTYLE, WHEAT N' SOY BREAD, EXOFAT & NUTRAFIT, AFICIONADO, HAIRWATCH SALON, FRAMEDSHOTS, OLYMPIQUE WEAR, OTIMUM SECURITY, IMAGE TEXT & FONTS, FLEURENTINA FLOWERSHOP, CRAVINGS, WAFFLE TIME, BINALOT, STARMAKER, SIGNUM EVENT ENGINEERING & STAGETEK COMPANY.

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Baritone Andrew Fernando in new "Pocahontas" opera in Virginia, USA

The world premiere of the chamber piece, with music by Linda Tutas Haugen, was in celebration of America's 400th founding anniversary

By Pablo A. Tariman
Contributor

THE CELEBRATION OF JAMESTOWN'S 400th anniversary in Virginia started this month with the visit of Queen Elizabeth, in whose honor a proper dinner was hosted by President Bush who goofed on the Queen's age and made it close to Virginia's founding years.

The Virginia Arts Festival followed with performances by pianist Andre Michel-Schub with the Virginia Symphony and violinist Gil Shaham and company, who belong to the "Who's Who in Chamber Music," and a memorable appearance of violinist Itzhak Perlman.

ANDREW Fernando, baritone

RAUL Sunico, pianist

The centerpiece of the celebration was the world premiere last Saturday of the chamber opera "Pocahontas" with music by Linda Tutas Haugen. The title refers to the American Indian princess Pocahontas, who might as well be seen as the "cultural broker" between native Virginian Powhatans and the English colonists.

The role of Powhatan, the father of Pocahontas, was sung by Filipino baritone Andrew Fernando, who was heard in Manila in the title role of "Eugene Onegin" in October and early this year in the title role of "Rigoletto" in California.

"The opera was a super production," Fernando told the INQUIRER on the night of the last technical rehearsal.

After his Virginia engagement, Fernando will be heard in Boston in Bartok's "Bluebird Castle" and then will proceed to Manila to join the Great Performance Series at the Philamlife Theater by way of a special Aug. 18 recital with pianist Mary Anne Espina.

(For inquiries on Fernando's Aug. 18 homecoming recital, call (02) 900-7023 or 497-2971 or cell 0906-5104270).

Weekend art sale

For a change, classical music is figuring heavily in the grand weekend sale at the LRI Business Plaza, which is dominated by art galleries and first-rate coffee shops with exquisite cuisine.

Located along Nicanor Garcia St. (formerly Reposo) in Makati City, the business plaza owned by the family of Toni Lo has of late been the setting up several cultural happenings.

And then came the lure of classical music in the week-long sale.

"It's our way of attracting quality crowds and discerning art patrons," said William Tan, building administrator. "The previous year we had violinist Coke Bolipata, and next week we will have pianist Raul Sunico with the UST Woodwind Quintet."

This weekend sale actually has the feel of an arts festival. Starting today, an art auction, Philippine Visual Art and Collectibles, will be hosted by Ang Kayamanang Asya until May 25. The auction will feature works of Bencab, Ang Kiukok, Vicente Manansala, J. Elizalde Navarro, Hernando Ocampo, Victor Edades, Fabian de la Rosa, Sanso, Jose Blanco, Elizas Laxa, Norma Belleza.

A gifted French economist turned artist will have her one-woman show at Gallery Astra on May 25, to be followed by poetry reading on May 26 with Cesare Syjuco and the Electric Underground Collective.

With its array of 40 outlets consisting of galleries, antique shops, coffee shops with arts-oriented cuisine, spas and bargain centers, LRI Business Plaza will mount its culminating event with the concert of Sunico and the UST Woodwind Quintet on May 30. The concert is presented by Grupo Reposo and LRI Business Plaza. Call 895-1772.

Fundraising concert

There was a lot to admire in the fundraising concert of soprano Banaue Miclat, who is also a first-rate actress and a folk dancer, at the Church of Risen Lord in Diliman in April.

For one who started voice lessons less than two years ago, the vocal output was solid and she unleashed a bigger surprise: She acted what she sang.

With superb accompaniment by pianist Mary Anne Espina, Miclat had a mixed program of Filipino songs, operatic arias and excerpts from operettas and the inevitable Broadway entries.

Her "O mio babbino caro" had a fragile, youthful angst, and her "Mein Herr Marquis" (from "Die Fledermaus") had a magical quality.

Her "Signore, ascolta" (from "Turandot") and "Ave Maria" (from "Otello") were, however, a case of too much too soon for her voice, but she acquitted herself quite well.

Her guest singer, tenor Dondi Ong, was competent in "Nessun dorma," and the two sailed into the Broadway number "Last Night of the World" with confident delight.

The event was a fundraising concert for the Maningning Miclat Foundation and culminated in a raffle of artworks by noted artists.

Raul Sunico, on life as a performing artist, conservatory head and cultural worker

How does it feel to perform in an intimate venue where audiences are practically a breathing distance away?

An intimate setting enables the performer to render pieces that do not require grandiose or formal venues. As such, even miniature pieces such as Mazurkas, Preludes, and the like are given more acute attention. I used to be quite conscious when my audience was practically breathing down my neck.

Nowadays, I have gotten used to it as I've experienced a number of instances when the hall was not that big and people were seated practically next to me.

It also helped me that I have been giving lecture concerts, so I am less scared of people watching me.

How do you find time to practice with your hands full as head of UST's Conservatory of Music, NCCA commissioner and other commitments? You will conduct a music camp in Nueva Ecija before your Makati concert.

Most of my rehearsals are done at home late at night, when my work at the office and other social commitments are already done. It is a bit challenging to fight off fatigue and sleepiness, but when there are deadlines to meet or pieces to perform, the incentive is strong enough to do what has to be done.

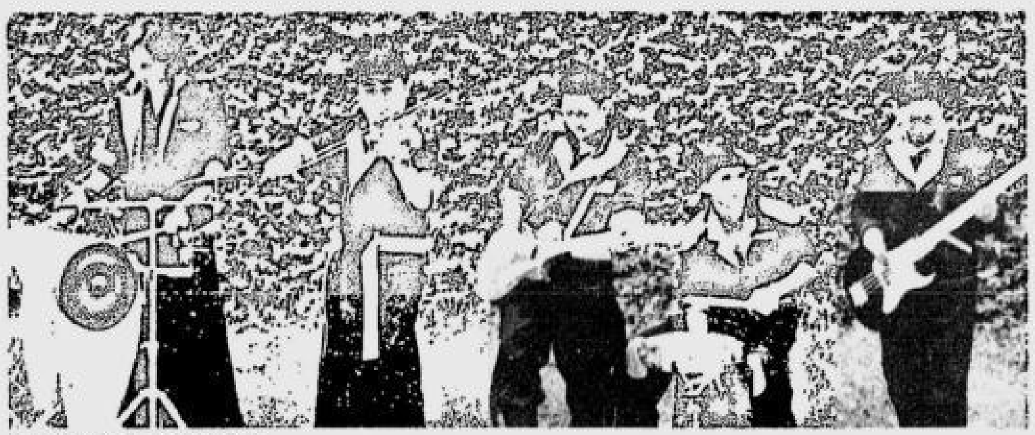
When I became head of the conservatory, I only had the faintest idea of what to do, since I never had any administrative experience before.

However, my vision of elevating the status and stature of the Filipino musician became my guiding principle as I sought to update the curriculum, invite local and foreign lecturers and performers, organize performing activities, and even send whole performing ensembles abroad.

It also became a sort of philanthropic mission as I could not resist helping out the many talented music students who did not have the necessary resources to go through college. I am quite happy though that in addition to my own contribution, I have tapped a number of friends of mine who are just too eager to provide scholarships.

What would you say is the future of classical music and classical musicians in the country?

The future of classical music depends on a number of factors—government support, private sector support, media exposure, increase in the proportion of music hours in the school curriculum, elevation of artistic standards, and cooperation among musicians. It is a tall order, and oftentimes, one or more of these factors is missing. However, this does not deter us from contributing our own small part towards a noble end.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Casa San Miguel opens 14th Pundaquit Festival

THE 14TH PUNDAQUIT FESTIVAL OF THE Casa San Miguel Foundation in San Antonio, Zambales opens on May 26 with concerts and exhibits featuring its grantees and scholars, as part of its mission of nurturing artistic excellence in the rural community.

The event is also in observance of the second death anniversary of Ricardo K. Bolipata, one of Casa San Miguel's founding members and patrons.

On May 26, 6 p.m., 16-year-old violinist Joseph Valdes takes centerstage in a recital at the Ramon Corpus Hall with pianist Ruth Quiñones.

His repertoire includes Bach's G Minor Solo Sonata, Beethoven's Sonata No. 8 in G Major, Bazzini's Dance of the Goblins, Tartini's Devil's Trill Sonata, Sarasate's Zapateado, and Paganini's Caprice No. 5.

JOSEPH VALDES, violinist

Valdes started in violin at age nine as part of the Waldorf School Program before transferring to Coke Bolipata as scholar of Miriam College's Center for Applied Music. He gave his first solo recital at age 14 at Casa San Miguel. Currently a junior student at the Ateneo High School, he was a spokesperson for Promil's Pro-Gifted Program, which brought him to performances across the Philippines.

On May 27, 3 p.m., CASA San Miguel will launch its annual exhibit of grantees and resident artists at the Siemens Hall.

On display are the latest art works of Plet Bolipata, fresh from her residency grant at the Vermont Art Center, Carlo Gabuco, Jan Leeroy New, Zaniel Mariano, Brendale Tadeo and Don Salubayba.

Gabuco is a 2006 Philippine Art Awards finalist, New is a Metrobank MADE grand prize winner in sculpture and second placer at the Shell Art Competition in 2004 and 2006, Mariano a 2002 Petron Art Competition finalist, and Salubayba an Asian Cultural Council grantee.

The launch will be followed by a concert featuring the music scholars and grantees of CASA San Miguel, with the special participation of the Makiling Ensemble, a musical group from the Philippine High School for the Arts in Los Baños.

Call 933-2392 and 903-8657 for more details.

Diageo Philippines, Inc. (formerly International Distillers Philippines, Inc.) apologizes to Mr. Ariel "Aga" Muhlach for the inclusion of his picture and his name, without his consent, in the Smirnoff Mule advertisement published in the Lifestyle Section of the Philippine Daily Inquirer on 20 September 1999 and for whatever anxiety that said advertisement may have caused him.

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ANTONIO A. HIDALGO

Here's to the City of Pines, which opens its arms to us, and continues to gift us with small surprises every single time

By Cristina Pantoja Hidalgo
Contributor

MANY OF MY FRIENDS don't particularly like Baguio anymore. One of them just goes up every Holy Week from habit more than anything else.

It's a family ritual—the entire clan goes up, including grandparents and babies. But they never leave the Country Club except to go to shopping in John Hay's Mile High and for Visita Iglesia on Holy Thursday.

Another one, who hadn't been up for some time, went for a meeting, and was shocked at how dirty and seedy Session Road had become. And a third, when she heard we had gone up again this summer, texted: "Is it at least cool, or just polluted?"

But Tony and I are incorrigible about Baguio. Even during those long years when we were living overseas, we never failed to make the trip up whenever we were in Manila on home leave.

We have photos recording each daughter's first trip there; mounted on a "horsie" in Wright Park; being rowed by the father on the lake in Burnham Park; grinning beside the flowers in Imelda Park (now the Baguio Botanical Garden); standing under the pines outside Pines Hotel; going up and down the "transparent elevator" in the doomed Hyatt Terraces.

And there were the other rituals established by our parents: a *ho-to-tay* lunch at Rose Bowl; breakfast of scrambled eggs and bacon at Star Café; a visit to the St. Louis silver shop for filigreed silver trinkets (no other shop did such fine work—Ibay's was a poor second); a visit to the Good Shepherd convent for *ube* jam and strawberry jam and peanut brittle (no other products even came close); Caesar's Salad at Mario's on Session Road.

Later there was antique-hunting in Maharlika; *gado gado* salad and Ole Nick sandwich at Café by the Ruins; Mongolian Barbecue at O Mai Khan; woven pillowcases and bags at Narda's; December by the fireplace in a cottage in Camp John Hay.

When the kids were grown-up but had not yet left home, they actually chose a three-story white wooden house, which they decided we ought to buy so we could turn it into an inn and retire there.

It's still there, that old-fashioned white house. We drive past it often and I get a little sad, wishing that they were all little again. And I think the memory of those seasons spent with them in this mountain resort is

BAGUIO/E3

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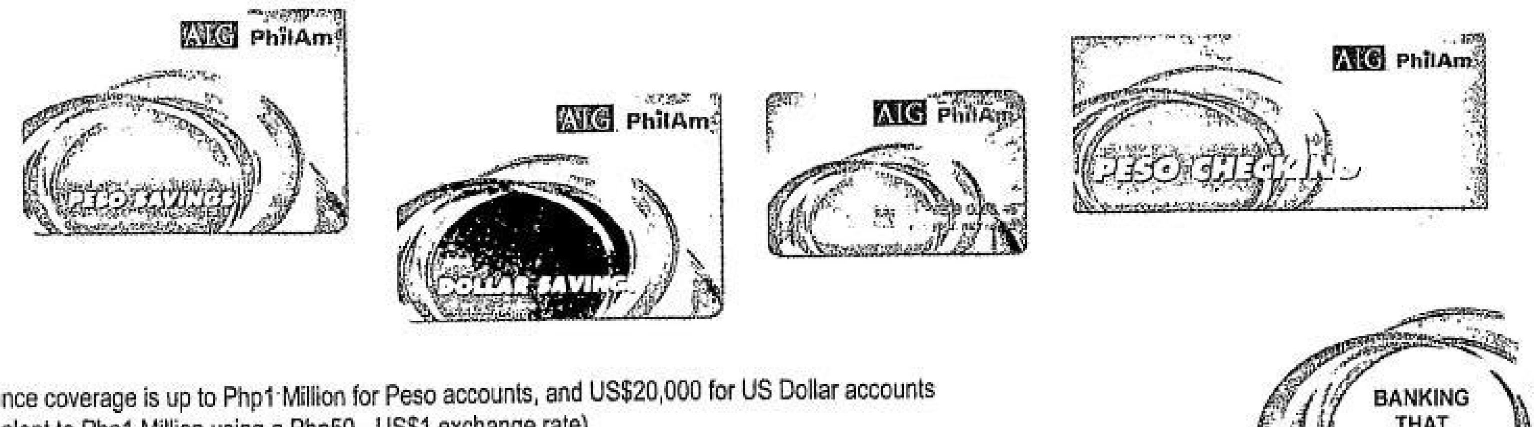

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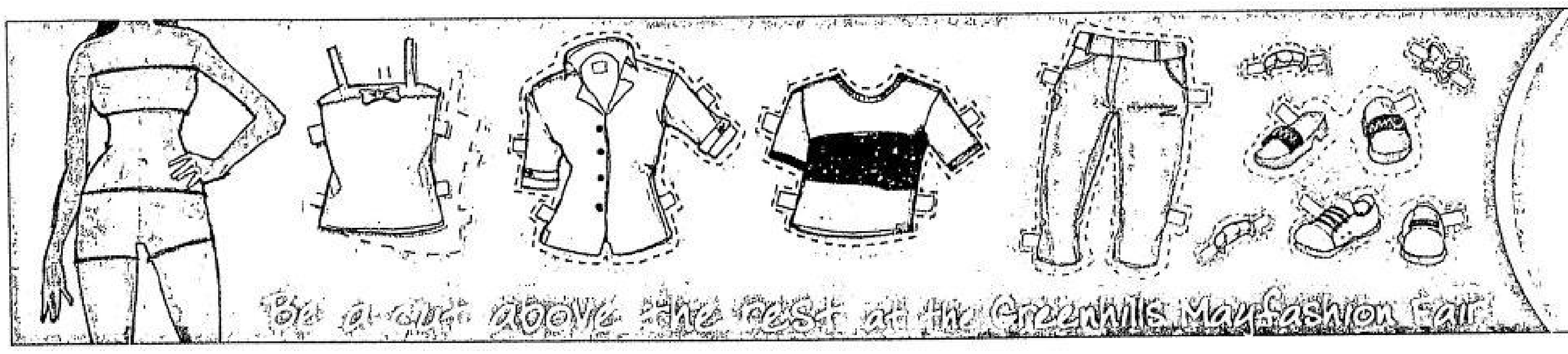

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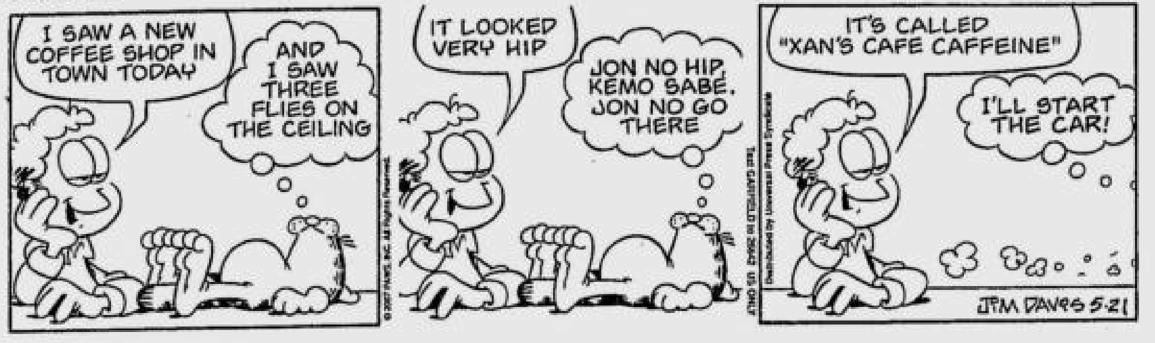
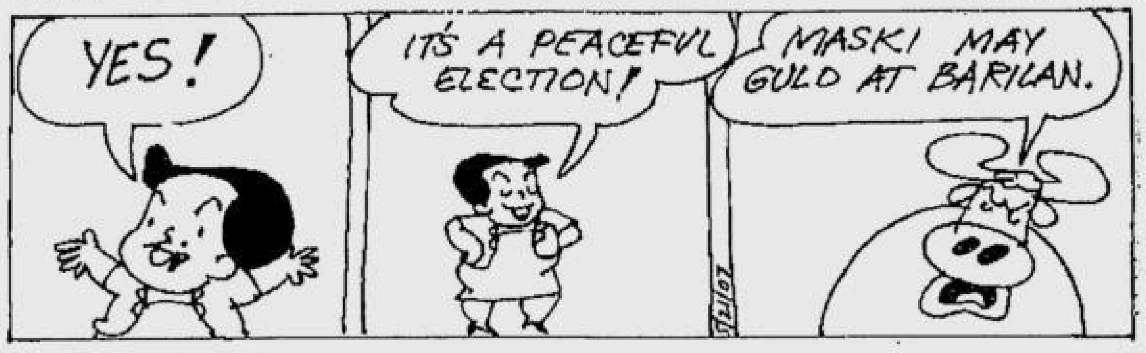
GARFIELD

BY JIM DAVIS


I SAW A NEW COFFEE SHOP IN TOWN TODAY
AND I SAW THREE FLIES ON THE CEILING
IT LOOKED VERY HIP
JON NO HIP, KEMO SABE. JON NO GO THERE
IT'S CALLED "XAN'S CAFE CAFFEINE"
I'LL START THE CAR!
JIM DAVIS 5-21

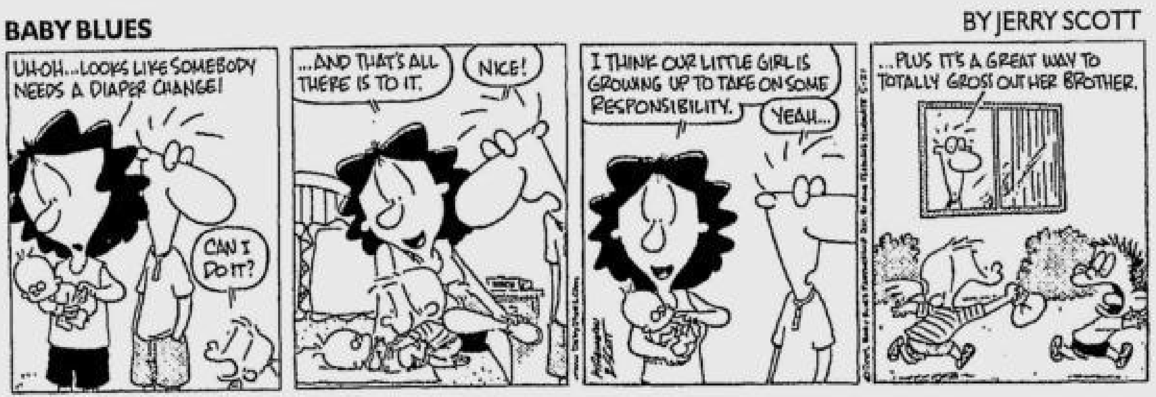
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


YES!
IT'S A PEACEFUL ELECTION!
MASKI MAY GULO AT BARILAN.

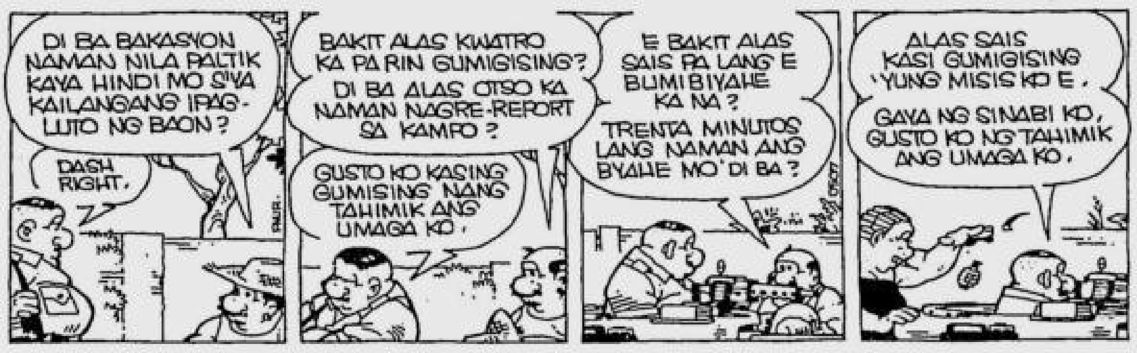
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


UH-OH...LOOKS LIKE SOMEBODY NEEDS A DIAPER CHANGE!
CAN I DO IT?
...AND THAT'S ALL THERE IS TO IT.
NICE!
I THINK OUR LITTLE GIRL IS GROWING UP TO TAKE ON SOME RESPONSIBILITY.
YEAH...
...PLUS IT'S A GREAT WAY TO TOTALLY GROSS OUT HER BROTHER.

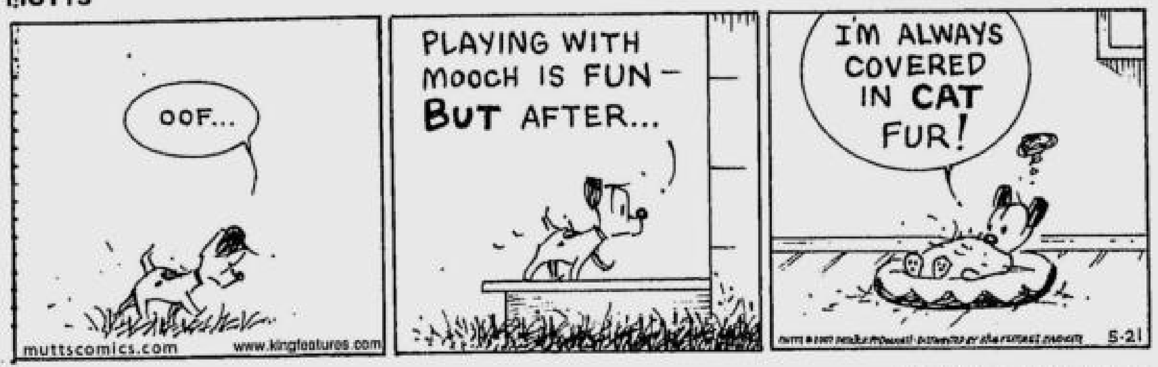
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


DI BA BAKASYON NAMAN NILA PALTIK KAYA HINDI MO S'YA KAILANGANG IPAG-LUTO NG BAON?
DASH RIGHT.
BAKIT ALAS KWATRO KA PA RIN GUMIGISING?
DI BA ALAS OTSO KA NAMAN NAGRE-REPORT SA KAMPO?
GUSTO KO KASING GUMISING NANG TAHIMIK ANG UMAGA KO.
E BAKIT ALAS SAIS PA LANG E BUMIBIYAHE KA NA?
TRENTA MINUTOS LANG NAMAN ANG BYAHE MO' DI BA?
ALAS SAIS KASI GUMIGISING 'YUNG MISIS KO E.
GAYA NG SINABI KO, GUSTO KO NG TAHIMIK ANG UMAGA KO.

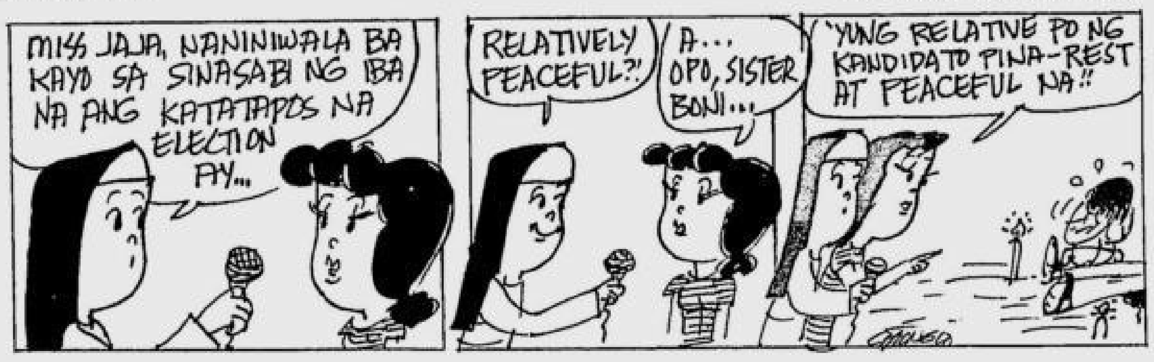
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


OOF...
muttscomics.com
www.kingfeatures.com
PLAYING WITH MOOCH IS FUN— BUT AFTER...
I'M ALWAYS COVERED IN CAT FUR!
5-21

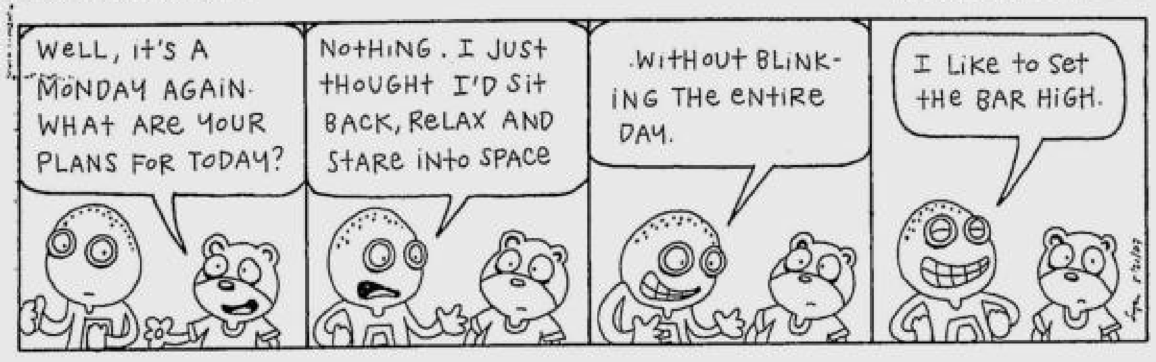
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


MISS JAJA, NANINIWALA BA KAYO SA SINASABI NG IBA NA ANG KATATAPOS NA ELECTION AY...
RELATIVELY PEACEFUL?!
A... OPO, SISTER BONI...
'YUNG RELATIVE PO NG KANDIDATO PINA-REST AT PEACEFUL NA!!

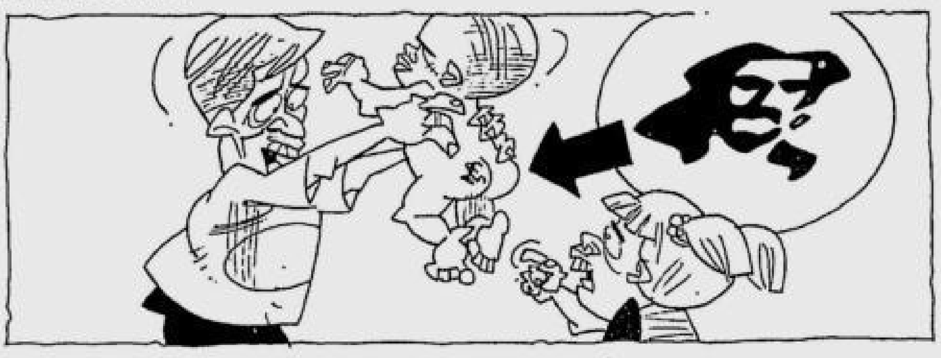
ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


WELL, IT'S A MONDAY AGAIN. WHAT ARE YOUR PLANS FOR TODAY?
NOTHING. I JUST THOUGHT I'D SIT BACK, RELAX AND STARE INTO SPACE
WITHOUT BLINKING THE ENTIRE DAY.
I LIKE TO SET THE BAR HIGH.

DIVINE COMEDY

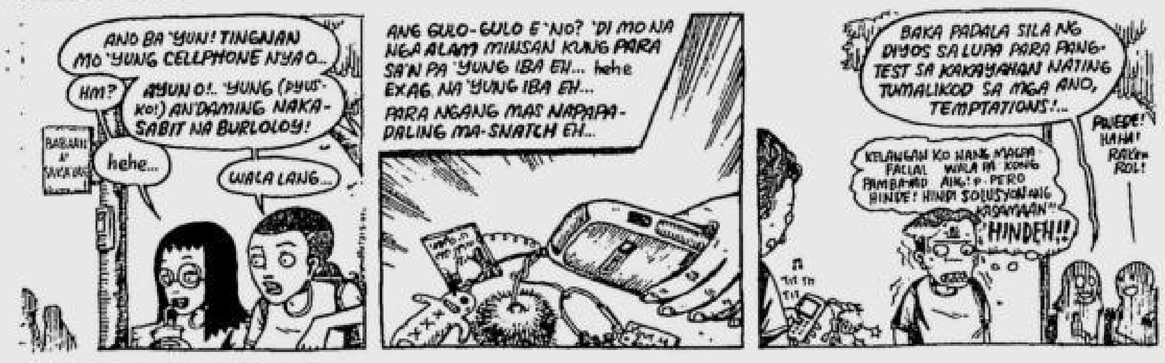
BY STEVEN PABALINAS



AT NAG-PILGRIMAGE ANG MGA TAO SA BAHAY NI IGNACIO NANG NALAMAN NILA NA MAY "BIRTHMARK" ANG ANAK NYA NA KAHUGIS NG MUKHA NI KRISTO

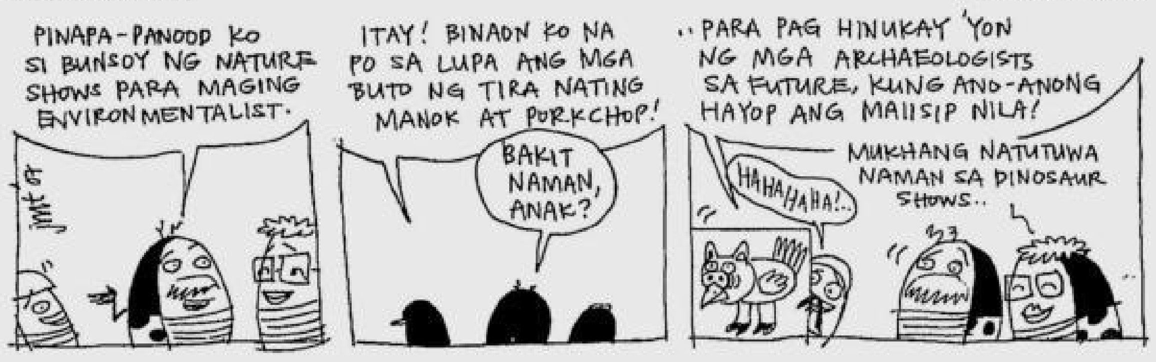
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


ANO BA 'YUN! TINGNAN MO 'YUNG CELLPHONE NYA O...
HM?
AYUN O!. 'YUNG (DYUS-KO!) ANDAMING NAKA-SABIT NA BURLOLOY!
hehe...
WALA LANG...
ANG GULO-GULO E 'NO? 'DI MO NA NGA ALAM MINSAN KUNG PARA SA'N PA 'YUNG IBA EH... hehe EXAG. NA 'YUNG IBA EH...
PARA NGANG MAS NAPAPA-DALING MA-SNATCH EH...
BAKA PADALA SILA NG DIYOS SA LUPA PARA PANG-TEST SA KAKAYAHAN NATING TUMALIKOD SA MGA ANO, TEMPTATIONS!...
KELANGAN KO HANG MAGPA FACIAL WALA PA KONG PAMBAYAD AIN! P. PERO HINDE! HINDI SOLUSYON ANG KASAMAAN!
HINDEH!!
PWEDE! HAHA! RAK-ROL!

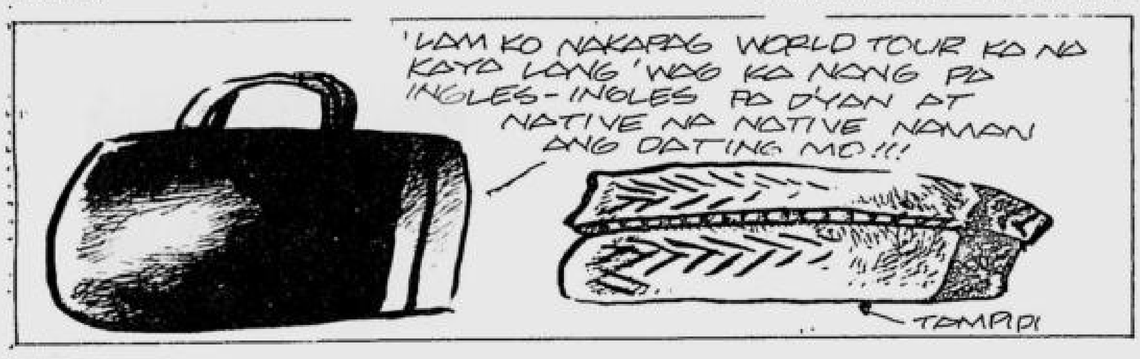
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


PINAPA-PANOOD KO SI BUNSOY NG NATURE SHOWS PARA MAGING ENVIRONMENTALIST.
ITAY! BINAON KO NA PO SA LUPA ANG MGA BUTO NG TIRA NATING MANOK AT PORKCHOP!
BAKIT NAMAN, ANAK?
..PARA PAG HINUKAY 'YON NG MGA ARCHAEOLOGISTS SA FUTURE, KUNG ANO-ANONG HAYOP ANG MAIISIP NILA!
HAHAHAHA!..
MUKHANG NATUTUWA NAMAN SA DINOSAUR SHOWS..

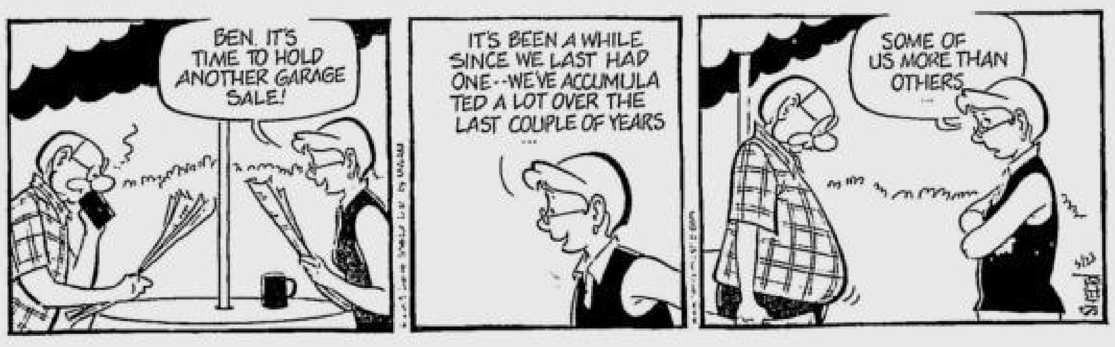
TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING

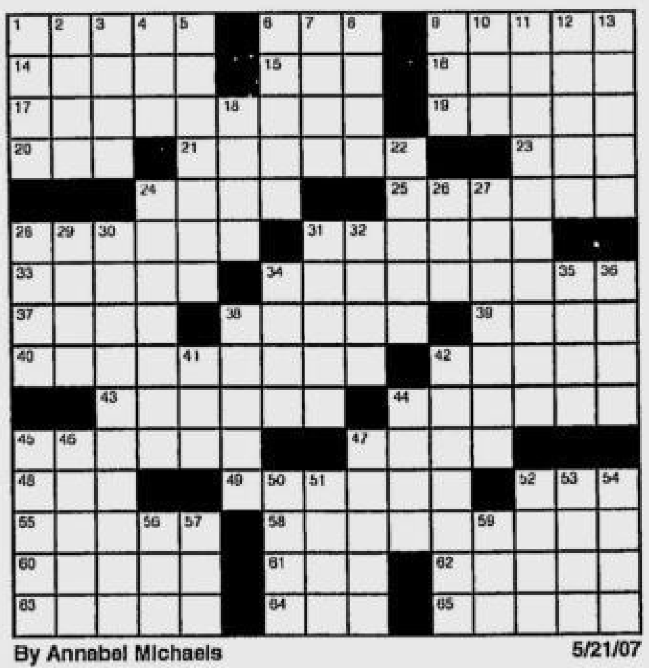

'LAM KO NAKAPAG WORLD TOUR KA NA KAYA LANG 'WAG KA NANG PA INGLES-INGLES PA D'YAN AT NATIVE NA NATIVE NAMAN ANG DATING MO!!!
TAMPIPI

BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


BEN, IT'S TIME TO HOLD ANOTHER GARAGE SALE!
IT'S BEEN A WHILE SINCE WE LAST HAD ONE--WE'VE ACCUMULATED A LOT OVER THE LAST COUPLE OF YEARS
SOME OF US MORE THAN OTHERS.

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Annabel Michaels
Williamsburg, VA

5/21/07

ACROSS
1 Gear feature
6 Cloud cover
9 Hidden supply
14 Davis of films
15 Zodiac lion
16 Arson clues
17 Daily assignment?
19 Quick attacks
20 Phoenix cager
21 Croatia's capital
23 T-shirt size
24 Faddish collectibles
25 Sultan's decrees
28 Senility
31 Foreign official
33 Gambling game
34 Golf hazards
37 Encrusted
38 Washbourne and Freeman
39 One woodwind
40 Priest or rabbi
42 Presses
43 __ with the same brush
44 Trapper's traps
45 Irritability
47 Aardvark meal
48 Parcel of land
49 Plane garage
52 Make things happen
55 Texas landmark
58 Explosive assignment?
60 Make repairs at Wrigley
61 Seth's mother
62 Ornamental coronet
63 Questioned
64 Do needlework
65 Spellcaster

DOWN
1 Goes one better than
2 Jacob's twin
3 "SportsCenter" stn.
4 Alliance
5 Werner and Whitey
6 Drudges
7 TV chef Graham
8 Oxen hitch
9 Ford or Dodge
10 Comparison phrase
11 Babysitting assignment?
12 Steeplechase barrier
13 Double curves
18 Hourly pay
22 Tight spots
24 Of ancient Egyptian documents
26 Q-U connectors
27 Australis and borealis
28 L times XVI
29 Verbal
30 Delivery assignment?
31 B.C. native
32 Son of Judah
34 Unspecified quantity
35 Johnnycake
36 Hr. with a shrink
38 Magi gift
41 Exam for srs.
42 Honestly
44 Hitch
45 Nurse Barton
46 Apertures
47 Nixon's V.P.
50 Lincoln and Fortas
51 Basilica section
52 Trojan War hero
53 Innermost section
54 Skier's lift
56 Cohort of Curly
57 Unmatched
59 Kind of chart

Saturday's Puzzle Solved

M	I	D	■	A	B	S	C	E	S	S	■	S	R	A
A	S	E	■	L	I	K	A	B	L	E	■	P	E	R
R	O	C	K	Y	B	A	L	B	O	A	■	A	B	R
S	T	R	E	S	S	T	E	S	T	S	■	R	E	O
H	O	E	R	S	■	■	■	■	S	I	N	G	L	Y
A	P	P	R	A	I	S	E	D	■	D	U	E	T	O
L	E	I	S	■	C	O	D	I	C	E	S	■	■	■
S	S	T	■	H	A	N	G	E	R	S	■	W	A	Y
■	■	■	F	O	L	I	A	G	E	■	B	O	N	O
A	L	A	R	M	■	C	R	O	S	S	R	O	A	D
M	I	L	I	E	U	■	■	■	■	L	A	D	L	E
P	E	P	■	P	T	E	R	O	D	A	C	T	Y	L
E	L	I	■	A	U	T	O	R	E	V	E	R	S	E
R	O	N	■	G	R	E	N	A	D	E	■	I	E	R
E	W	E	■	E	N	S	I	L	E	D	■	M	S	S

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5/21/07

HOROSCOPE

YOU BORN TODAY: Your success depends upon your own personal courage (which you have in abundance). You have specific ideas about society and like to think you can make a difference. As a result, others will often support you with energy or financial assistance. You like to run your own show. Get ready for a fabulous year—perhaps one of the best years of your life!

Birthdate of: Judge Reinhold, actor; Lisa Edelstein, actress; Ashlie Brillault, actress.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): This is an excellent day to sit down with relatives and siblings and make long-range plans about the future. You're in a very sensible frame of mind today.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): If shopping or doing business deals today, you'll be very cautious and practical. If you buy something it will certainly be long-lasting and durable.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): You're in an extremely sensible, practical frame of mind today. Discussions with others will be productive. You're particularly interested in the long-range view of things.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): You'll be extremely productive if you have to do any kind of research today. Nothing will be too much trouble. You'll search under every rock. But you will find your answers!

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Listen to the advice of someone older or more experienced today. After all, you don't have to reinvent the wheel. Why not stand on the shoulders of those who've gone before you?

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Now is the time to sit down with bosses or parents and make long-range plans about the future. You won't overlook details.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): This is an excellent day to study, sign up for a course or do any work that requires concentration and attention to detail. You're in the zone!

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Research in any form will yield good results for you today. You're persevering and dedicated. You're willing to cover every detail.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Serious discussions with partners and close friends can be fruitful today. You're more concerned with what is happening tomorrow than you are with today's results. (It's very sensible.)

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): When working today, choose work that requires perseverance and attention to detail because this is where you will excel. You're also willing to do routine, relatively boring work.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): This is a good day to discuss the care and maintenance of children. Parents and caregivers are taking a long-range view of things. You might also want to make future plans about vacations.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Discussions about family businesses or family matters will be very productive today. This is also a good day to do family repairs and make plans for the future.

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku by Dave Green

4	8	2						
				9		7	3	2
		7	2					4
	3				6	5	1	
7	4			1			6	3
	1	6	9				7	
8					5	3		
9	5	1		6				
						1	2	5

Difficulty Level ★

5/21

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HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

4	8	3	2	9	1	7	5	6
5	2	1	6	4	7	3	8	9
7	9	6	5	3	8	2	4	1
6	5	9	4	1	3	8	7	2
2	1	4	8	7	6	5	9	3
3	7	8	9	5	2	1	6	4
1	4	7	3	8	9	6	2	5
8	6	5	1	2	4	9	3	7
9	3	2	7	6	5	4	1	8

Difficulty Level ★★★★★

MIGS VILLANUEVA

ROLAND Tolentino, Mark Cayanan, Jimmy Abad, Ricky de Ungria, Chingbee Cruz, National Artist Bencab, Jun Cruz Reyes, Edgar Samar, Jerry Gracio, Vim Nadera; (second row) Marby Villaceran, Larry Ypil, Kimi Tuvera, Ralph Galan, Daryll Delgado, Jing Hidalgo, Sandra Roldan, Butch Dalisay, National Artist Rio Alma, Charlson Ong, Adam David, Lilia Santiago, Honore de Dios; (third row) Rene Villanueva, Dennis Teodosio, Eros Atalia, Neil Garcia

Baguio, yet again

From page E1

now one more reason for returning to it.

Writers' workshop

This summer, I went up, first, for the UP National Writers' Workshop, which, since 1994, has been held there. This time we were booked at the AIM Lodge, inside Camp John Hay.

A wonderful choice, as John Hay is one of the few spots in the city where the pine fragrance remains strong and the air clean and fresh. And the lodge is just down the road from House of Waffles, which allowed us to use their Wi-fi connection for free.

The visit from University of the Philippines Diliman chancellor Gerry S. Cao, the workshop's chief sponsor, was a first. Gerry made it both to the round-table discussion on current trends in Philippine literature held in UP Baguio; and to the workshop graduation and dinner, even staying to jam with the fellows afterward.

There was also the dinner and impromptu poetry reading at Bencab's sprawling, terraced farm in Asin, where both his home and his studio will soon be located. The unassuming, gracious National Artist has been our host so many times that the UP-ICW ought to make him an honorary fellow.

Another highlight was Fellows' Night held at Iggy's, Des Bautista's place, which is not just a restaurant but a museum and art gallery showcasing Des' personal collection of precious Philippine art. And, for the teaching panel, the usual visit to Delfin Tolentino's hilltop home—an artist's haven, and a work of art in itself.

And drinks and the music of On Call, the band which we first discovered at Pilgrim's Café on Session Road, followed to Leonard Wood Drive, and discovered again at the Manor.

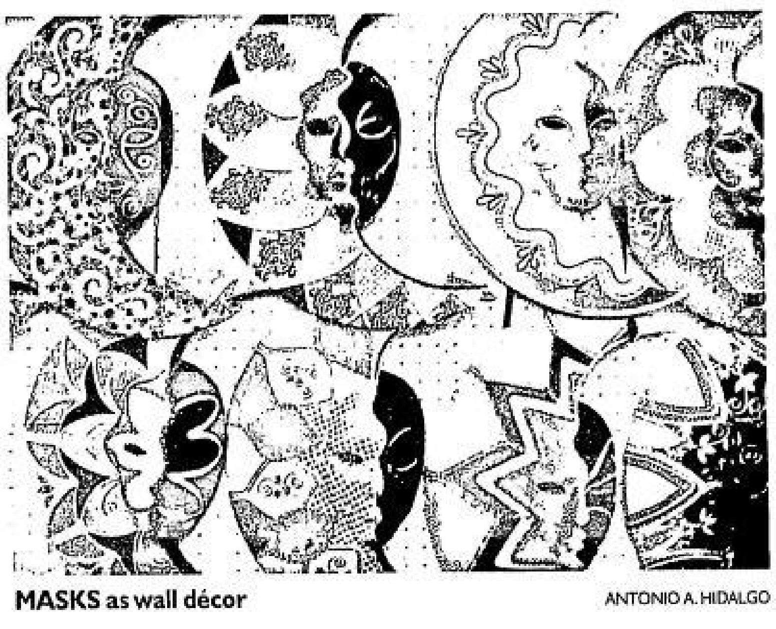
But despite all of that being great fun, for me, it was also work.

Not so the trip Tony and I took with Lara (the only one of our girls still living at home) some two weeks later. The city had been spruced up (in time for the coming elections perhaps), and an unexpected cold front had turned the nights chilly even if the days were golden bright.

(Our only complaint was the nightmarish traffic around that rotunda with the fake pine tree at the foot of the little hill leading to SM, which was holding a three-day sale. Why couldn't the city have installed traffic lights there, or, at the very least, sent a couple of cops to direct traffic?)

GLITTERY masks made of papier-mâché and resin, sold in Chavez Store, Mines View Park

ANTONIO A. HIDALGO



MASKS as wall décor

ANTONIO A. HIDALGO

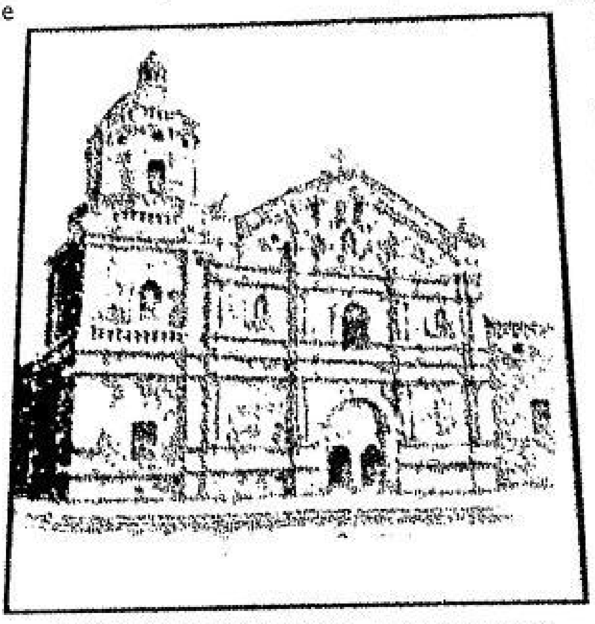
Old haunts

We spent our days just hanging out in our old haunts—pigging out (the special *bagnet* at Forest House, the *kalamansi* pie at O Mai Khan, the *shabu shabu* at Mini Shabu Shabu at the top of SM, practically everything on the menu at Ruins) and drinking Figaro coffee—and our evenings listening to music at the Manor.

And then, one drowsy afternoon, we tracked down this little place called Cora's in Mines View Park, where we remembered having the best *chicharon bulaklak* in the world. We took it with cold beer, sitting at the same table on the far end of the room, with the glass windows overlooking the mountains and the pine trees.

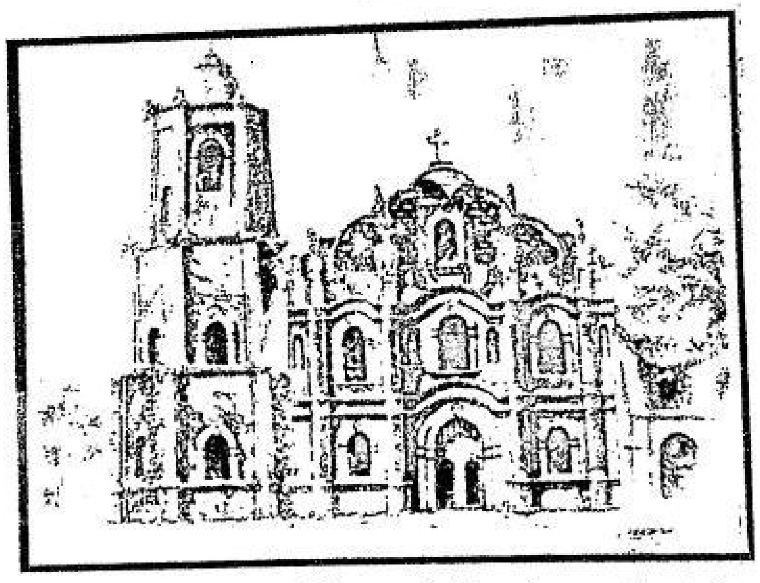
And then we noticed the pen-and-ink sketches of Philippine churches on the walls. Exquisitely done, and only P5,000 each. We were told by the owner, Corazon Permalino, that the artist, Noel Bueza, was her husband's nephew, that he used to live in Lucban, but had just left for Japan where someone had given him a job—she wasn't sure what sort of job. Whatever it is, I hope it has something to do with art.

And I hope someone about to put up a café or a bistro reads this, and goes up there to buy up the whole series (Tayabas, Lucban, Taal) to hang on its walls. In fact, I found myself wishing Tony and I were, in fact, innkeepers—the paintings would go perfectly with the three-story white house our daughters had picked out for us.



ANOTHER sketch by Buiza

ANTONIO A. HIDALGO



PEN-AND-INK sketch by Noel Buiza, sold in Cora's at Mines View Park

ANTONIO A. HIDALGO

And then we found this nameless little shop—one of many lining the main strip in Mines View—with the loveliest masks.

Harlequin masks of all sizes, beautifully costumed, in glittery, extravagant colors, beruffled, besequined, ready to be worn at glamorous masquerade balls; or pinned to walls in lieu of conventional paintings; or given as gifts to special friends; and, in miniature form, ready to be stuck to refrigerator doors or bulletin boards. They looked like they were made of porcelain but, in fact, were of papier-mâché and resin.

The saleslady told us the shop was owned by Teresita Chavez, but she didn't know who actually made the masks. There were other interesting things in there—dried flowers arranged in clay pots, straw angels, elegant jesters perched on ornamental boxes... Quite enchanting and quite out of place in that *tiangge*.

Our luck held out. The next day, strolling down Session Road, looking for the day's newspapers, we peered into this shop called Philippine Treasures. The "treasures" are inside glass counters which actually occupy only one side of the room.

Decorative items in filigreed silver—baskets, wine holders, boxes, caskets. And, to my pleasant surprise, these things I first found in one of the souvenir shops in Mile High, but which has since disappeared: candle-holders and butterflies of encrusted glass beads, in the loveliest colors—powder-blue shading into turquoise, rose quartz shading into amethyst, lemon yellow shading into amber, lime-green shading into moss.

Paz, the salesgirl, gave us a card. The owners are Albert and Lolly Gomez.

So here's to the City of Pines, which opens its arms to us, and continues to gift us with small surprises every single time!

The Gospel of Winning, according to George Sison

By Abe Florendo
Contributor

EVERYONE WANTS TO BE A winner—lovers, lotto players, brokers, beauty contestants, political candidates.

But it's not that kind of winning that George Sison in his inspirational booklet "I Am A Winner!" has focused his marvelous New Thought insight and sagacity on. It is winning on the side of Oneself, or what he calls your Forgotten Self, and on the side of the Universe, or what he also calls the Ultimate Observer.

You might whine: Couldn't I be a winner in the approving eyes of the Ultimate Observer and my Forgotten Self, and also win the £25 million lotto prize? Didn't ask Sison that, but I'm sure he'd say, I'm not a fortune teller or an investments analyst. And fixing you with a glacial stare, he'd also pronounce, that whiners can never be winners.

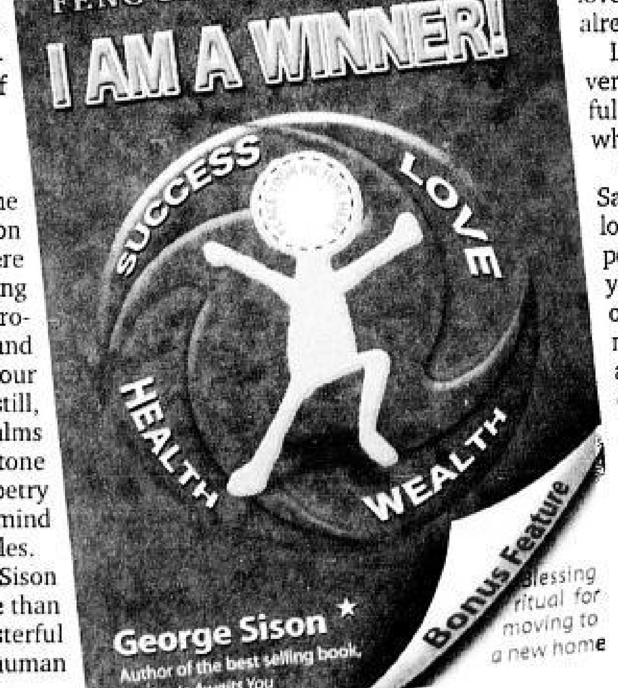
The booklet may be an indication of the evolution of Sison, the high priest of the Temple of Prayer, Peace and Prosperity (email george_df_sison@yahoo.com). Whereas before he'd refer to that benign and all-knowing Being as the Universe, and us as the children of the Universe, in this booklet the Sage unambiguously calls up the name of God and quotes, with consummate studiousness, from the Old Testament and the Gospels of the Apostles, to confirm and back up his "feng shui of the mind."

Oriental principles

Correlating, for instance, the Oriental principles of relaxation and wellbeing ("The moment there is tension, the mind stops working creatively") with biblical pronouncements ("In quietness and confidence shall be your strength"—Isaiah 30:45; "Be still, and know that I am God"—Psalms 46:10) marks a significant milestone in the journey of Sison from poetry and astrology and science of the mind to the enlightenment of the epistles.

With new-found realization, Sison intones: "The Holy Bible is more than a religious document. It is a masterful treatise on the workings of the human mind."

In typical George Sison style, the book is written with a light-hearted spirit (none of the foggy mysticisms of Chopra) and illustrated with almost whimsical visuals (collages, he says, to help you "visualize the ideas I am sharing with you").



FENG SHUI OF THE MIND
I AM A WINNER!
SUCCESS
LOVE
HEALTH
WEALTH
George Sison
Author of the best selling book, A Miracle Awaits You
Bonus Feature
Blessing ritual for moving to a new home

But there's eternality, and practicality, in his 102 short and succinct ways for practicing the feng shui of the mind.

Sison says that "those who seek love never find it; those who give it already have it."

Lovers don't always recognize this verity, but recognizing it will give fuller measure to this love. And when love ends on one side?

"When a heart breaks," says the Sage, "it opens. Who says you cannot love again?" He also says, "When people around you no longer make you love yourself, it is time to move on." How this simple precept would make life easier for scorned lovers and neglected and betrayed spouses.

Positive side

Problems have a positive side: "They always come bearing gifts," says Sison. And that bedeviling problem of an evil spirit? He explains it as the "spirit of evil and not an evil spirit. The spirit of evil is hate, vengeance, hostility, ill will, jealousy and fear. They do bedevil." How this has not occurred to us before!

Other precepts have more personal applications. Way 84 says: "The people you admire reflect your potential." Way 70: "What you cannot image, you cannot have." Way 77 is a lesson in politeness: "Never ask people how old they are; instead ask them how new they are."

One precept (Way 76) I have misgivings about. It says, "Talk to strangers—they are angels in disguise." Our mothers have always warned us never to speak to strangers or accept candies from them. I have had myself less-than-angelic experiences talking to strangers at street corners and bus stations. You can't be too careful these days anyway. And not in these parts.

What I'm saying is that if you have to talk to strangers, be sure you clearly perceive the angel's wings behind them; but I can't tell you how to do this. Didn't ask George.

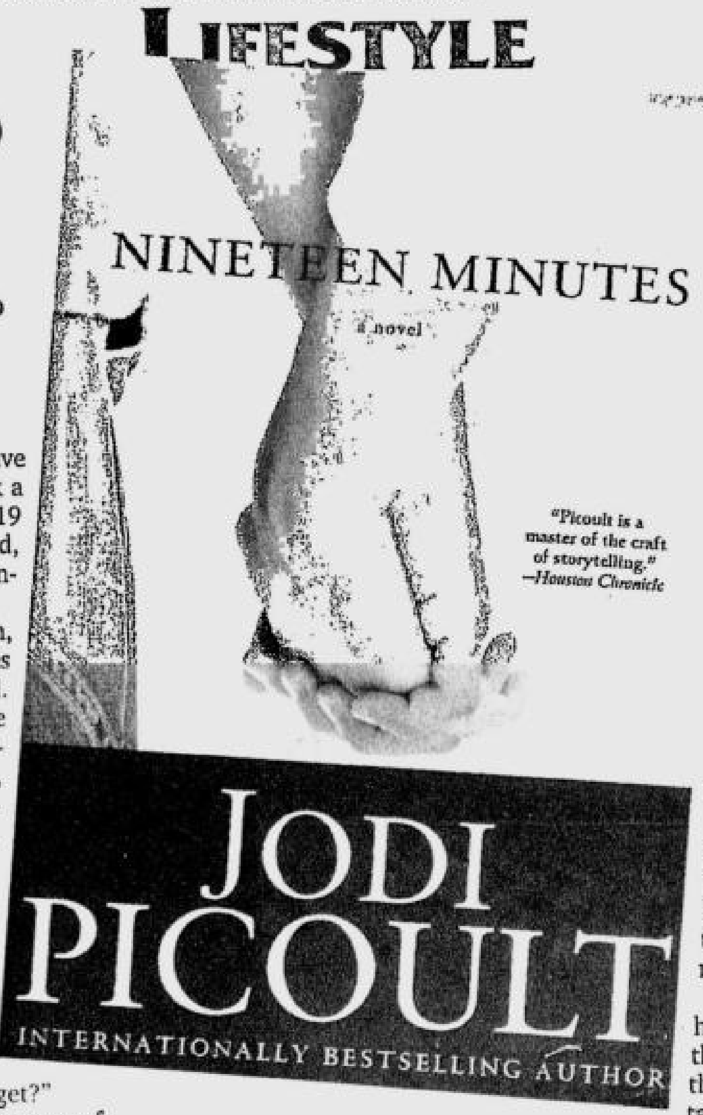
And when the precepts, followed faithfully, are not getting you anywhere near your desired goal, you ask yourself, What's happening? What went wrong? Where did I go wrong? Couldn't say. The Universe, the Ultimate Observer, the God of the Gospels, they don't show their cards.

But Sison offers a way to deal with it. He says: "Just when you begin to doubt you're a winner, life always takes an unexpected turn for the better." It does, and you better believe it. It's a universal truth, it's God's truth.

George Sison only has to codify it, as Way 68.

'Nineteen' going on forever

High school is as hellish as ever in Jodi Picoult's latest literary pity party


NINETEEN MINUTES
a novel
"Picoult is a master of the craft of storytelling." —Houston Chronicle
JODI PICOULT
INTERNATIONALLY BESTSELLING AUTHOR

"Nineteen Minutes: A Novel"
By Jodi Picoult
(Atria Books, New York-2007, 455 pages)

By Ruel S. De Vera

JUST HOW BAD WAS GROWING UP for you? Jodi Picoult knows your pain. In book after best-selling novel, Picoult has distilled the essence of adolescence into addictively readable tales about coming of age.

Yet with her 13th book, "Nineteen Minutes," Picoult herself truly comes of age as a fictionist.

Not only does she reunite loyal readers with characters from her earlier books, Picoult also employs her skill in manufacturing dialogue and building a believably claustrophobic world of pressured teens and well-meaning but oblivious parents.

Seemingly normal

Sterling, New Hampshire is relatively comfortable, seemingly normal—and Picoult's about to change everything.

"In 19 minutes, you can order a pizza and get it delivered," she writes. "You can read a story to a child or have your oil changed. You can walk a mile. You can sew a hem. In 19 minutes, you can stop the world, or you can jump off it. In 19 minutes, you can get revenge."

A shooting at Sterling High, lasting all of 19 minutes, shakes the entire town, leaving 10 dead. But the town is shocked by the identity of the shooter, 17-year-old Peter Houghton, a bright but bullied geek. Houghton refuses to talk even as detective Patrick Ducharme tries to piece together what happened. The only sentence out of Houghton's mouth chills: "How many did I get?"

Yet Houghton's tale is only one of several that form the DNA of "Nineteen Minutes." More immediate is that of Josie Cormier, a former friend of Peter who has become one of the popular kids. Not only did Josie lose her boyfriend, Sterling's hockey star Matt Royston, in the shooting, but her mother, Alex, ends up as the judge about to hear the case.

That intersection lies at the center of "Nineteen Minutes," and Picoult is the author with the remote control, confidently rewinding to decades before the shooting, hours after, then months before, then months after. It's a somewhat bewildering but ultimately effective device that adds layers of increasing resonance to "Nineteen Minutes."

Readers get a good look at the lives of two families—single mom Alex Cormier and daughter Josie, and college professor Lewis Houghton, midwife Lacy and son Peter—and how everything went wrong.

Parallel plots

Picoult lines up two parallel plots, the court case against Peter and the events that led him to do what he did. But there, as always, secrets that remain untold.

"By the time you read this, I hope to be dead," writes one of the teens. "You can't undo something that's happened; you can't take back a word that's already been said out loud. You'll think about me and wish that you had been able to talk me out of this."

Part of what makes Picoult so easy to read is how effortlessly she draws up the pervasive self-loathing of the pre-adult stage. Her depiction of the shooting itself is bracingly effective.

As far as characters go, Alex Cormier is a quantifiable element as the flawed perfect mother, and Josie, on the other hand, is a very complex character who seems enslaved to the narrative's needs. The secret that lies at the end of "Nineteen Minutes" is certainly daring, if a bit strange, all things considered.

Along with other heavy handed touches (Economist Lewis Houghton studying the formula for happiness? Seriously?), the patent need for that big twist hamstrings "Nineteen Minutes" a bit more than expected as it leads to a limp conclusion.

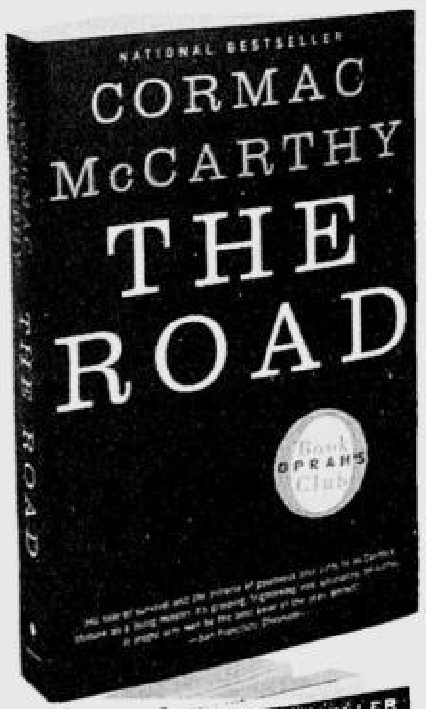
Yet even then, the ambitious, time-twisted plot marks "Nineteen Minutes" as a thoroughly solid read. Picoult takes audacious storytelling risks and yet still charms with her ear for dialogue.

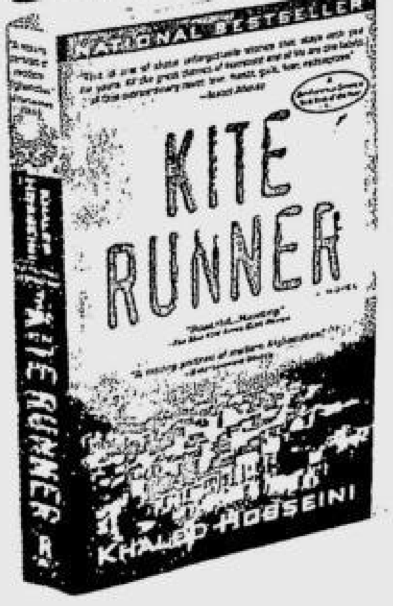
Peter's silence about his motivations only increases the tension and anyone who's ever been bullied or been an outsider in high school will feel sympathy for what Peter went through—even if you remain horrified by what he's done.

"Nineteen Minutes" is Jodi Picoult's best work so far, a shot right through the dark and light heart of the bright and benighted teenage years.

Available in paperback at National Book Store.

Book-club discussions





BEST KNOWN FOR HIS POWERFUL regional fiction ("Sutree," "Border Trilogy," "Blood Meridian"), Cormac McCarthy crafts tragic, unforgettable stories suffused with violence, alienation and an undeniably apocalyptic vision. In "The Road," considered McCarthy's best novel to date, the apocalypse itself becomes a set piece. Unfolding in a terrifying future where Armageddon has been waged and lost, this riveting novel traces the odyssey of a father and his young son through a desolate landscape of devastation and danger. Magnificent and moving by any standard, this is McCarthy at his greatest and gravest.

A novel about friendship and betrayal, and about the price of loyalty, "The Kite Runner" by Khaled Hosseini, centers on the bonds between fathers and sons, and the power of fathers over sons—their love, their sacrifices and their lies. Written against a backdrop of history that has not been portrayed in fiction before, "The Kite Runner" describes the rich culture and beauty of a land in the process of being destroyed. But through the devastation, Hosseini offers hope through the novel's faith in the power of reading and storytelling, and in the possibilities he shows us for redemption.

Join the Power Book Club discussions for "The Road" on May 29, 6:30 p.m., at PowerBooks Greenbelt, and May 30, 6:30 p.m., at PowerBooks Megamall for "The Kite Runner."

PowerBooks Specialty Store has branches at Greenbelt 4 (7576428-29), SM Megamall (6352898-99), Alabang Town Center (8505662-63), Glorietta 3 (7527075), Shangri-La (6380023/25), Robinson's Place Ermita (5233334, 5243448), SM Mall of Asia (5560244) and Festival Supermall (8508221):

New poetry collections

HIGH CHAIR WILL LAUNCH THREE NEW poetry collections on May 25, 5 p.m., at the UP Press Bookstore, Balay Kalinaw, University of the Philippines Diliman.

Titles to be launched are Marc Gaba's "How Sound Becomes A Name," José Perez Beduya's "Seem," and Mesandel Virtusio Arguelles' "Hindi Man Lang Nakita."

A founding member of High Chair, Gaba received his MFA in Creative Writing from the Iowa Writers' Workshop. Last year, he won the Boston Review Poetry Prize.

Beduya finished his MFA in Creative Writing at Cornell University and now holds a residency at the Santa Fe Art Institute.

Arguelles is the author of two previous collections of poetry, "Menos Kuwarto" and "Ilahas." He won a Palanca for his poetry.

The event will also coincide with the launch of the seventh issue of High Chair's online poetry journal (www.highchair.com.ph).

Featured are new poems by American poet Frank Bidart, Rosmon Tuazon, Oliver Ortega, Kristine Domingo, Alex Gregorio, as well as critical essays on poetry by Gaba, Conchitina Cruz and Mabi David.

High Chair is a nonprofit small press that aims to promote genuine interest in poetry in the Philippines. Apart from maintaining an online poetry website, it regularly publishes full-length books and chapbooks.

E-mail highchair@gmail.com.

Mojares kicks off UP Baguio centennial lecture series

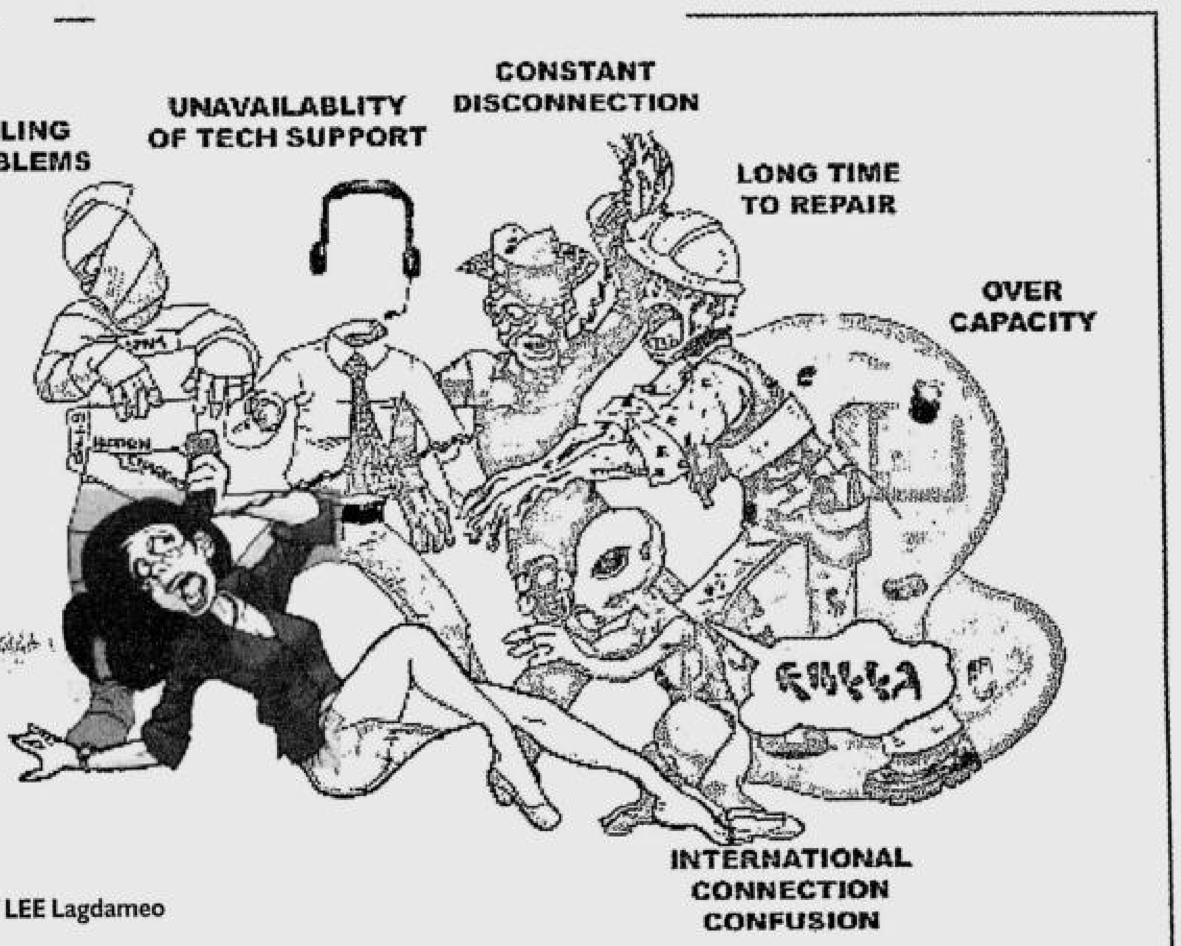
THE UP CENTENNIAL LECTURE SERIES OF the University of the Philippines Baguio (UPB) kicks off on June 20 with cultural critic and historian Resil Mojares delivering a lecture on the importance of Isabelo de los Reyes in Philippine intellectual life.

His lecture, "Isabelo's Archive: The Importance of Isabelo de los Reyes in Philippine Studies," stems from his most recent book, "Brains of the Nation," published by the Ateneo University Press in 2006. Mojares will discuss how Isabelo's body of works provides guideposts in terms of the agenda, content, language and form of Filipino scholarship.

Born in Vigan, Isabelo de los Reyes is known in Philippine history as one of the major Propagandists and founder of the first workers' union in the Philippines. He also played a major role in the establishment of the Philippine Independent Church.

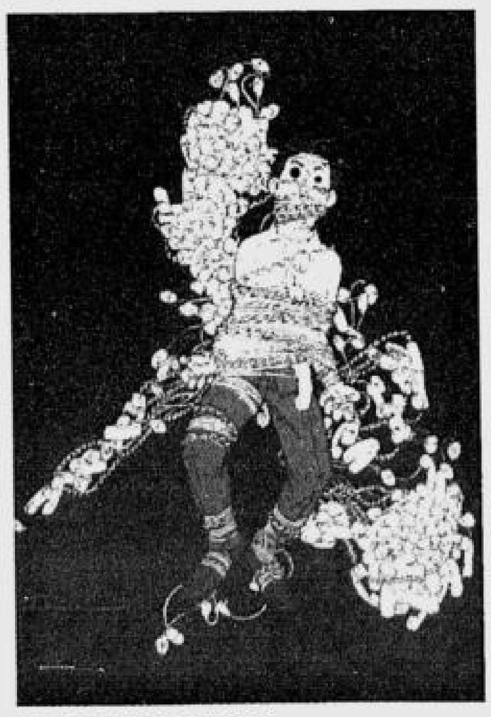
Mojares is currently Professor Emeritus at the University of San Carlos in Cebu. He is the author of numerous books and articles on Philippine culture and society. His book "The Rise of the Filipino Novel" is considered by many as one of the most important contributions to Philippine literary scholarship.

Mojares's lecture starts at 2:30 p.m. at the Bulwagang Juan Luna of UPB. It is open to the public.



BY LEE Lagdameo

Top Pinoy cartoonists illustrate state of local telco industry



"COMMUNICATIONS Technology State of Satisfaction," by Ryan Orosco

THE STATE OF PHILIPPINE telecommunications has become fit for parody. A recent telco-wide survey revealed that nearly 90 percent of Filipinos are dissatisfied with their current communications providers.

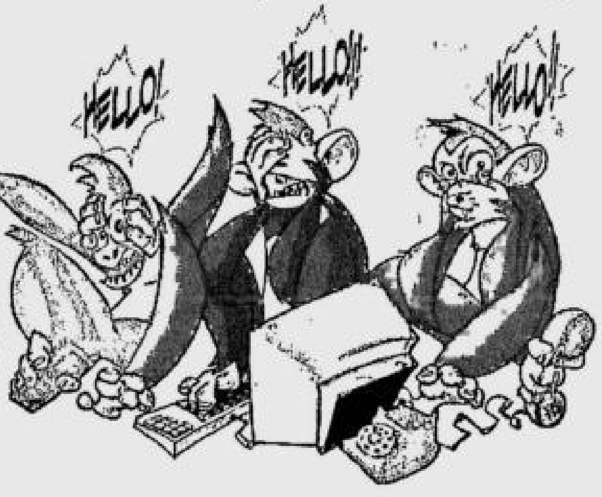
The less-than-stellar results prompted top cartoonist Lee Lagdameo to team up with maverick telco-provider Bayan Telecommunications to bring some levity to the status quo and present to the public a candid representation of today's telecommunications industry.

The participating cartoonists were Lagdameo, Jon Zamar and Ryan Orosco.

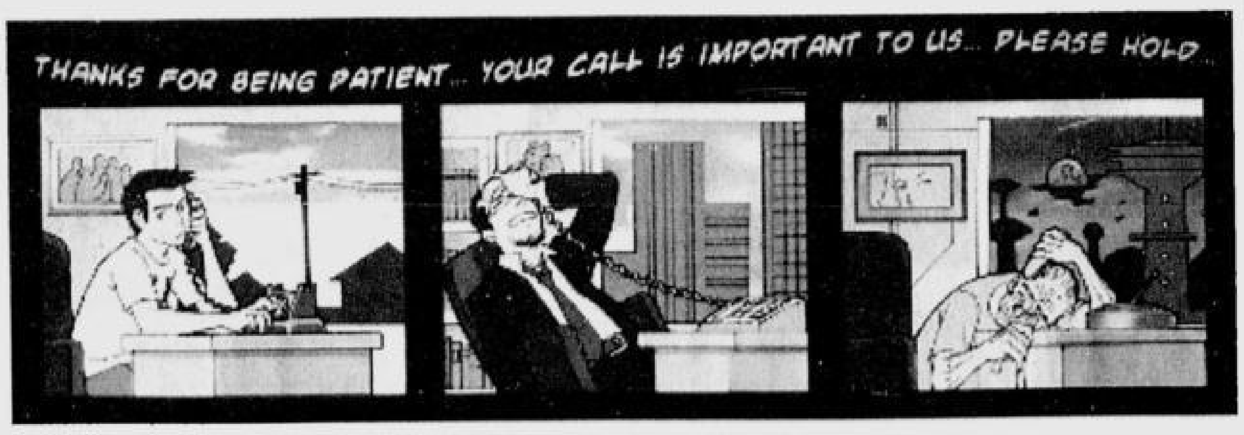
Bayantel is one of the more proactive telcos in the industry. The company has the most stable fiber-optics infrastructure in the country and was the first to market revolutionary services like the caller ID, VoIP and the landline-cell phone hybrid, Span.

One of its new services is the Customer Satisfaction Guarantee program, a P50-million rebate program that aims to back up the company's quick-repair promise.

Tunde Fafunwa, chief executive consultant of Bayan Telecommunications, explains: "If a phone or DSL connection remains un-repaired for more than 24 hours, a one-day refund (equivalent to P100) will be given for every four hours the problem stays unsolved." If a subscriber's connection is out for more than 72 hours, on the other hand, his or her service fee for the month would be waived.


HELLO!
HELLO!!
HELLO!!

"EVERY Technology Faces Its Own Unique Difficulties, but the Same Ultimate Problem: Connection," by Jon Zamar

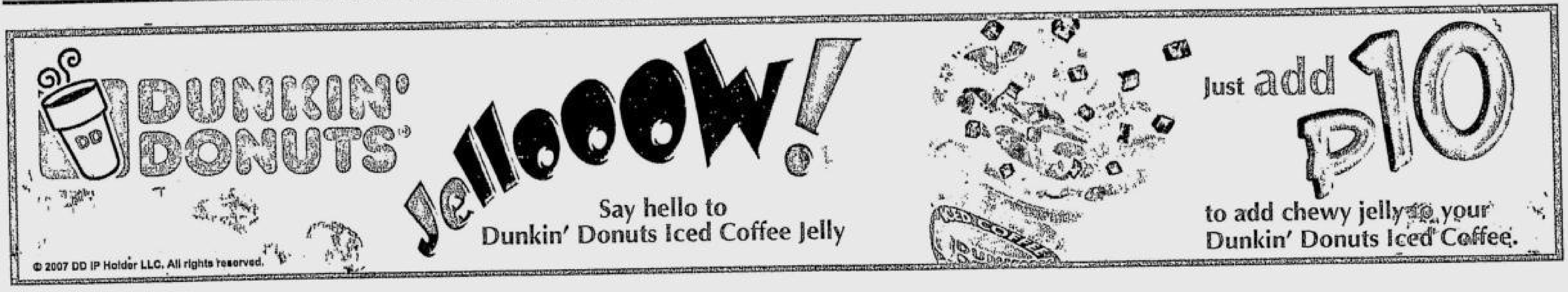

THANKS FOR BEING PATIENT... YOUR CALL IS IMPORTANT TO US... PLEASE HOLD...

"THANK You for Being Patient... Your Call Is Important to Us...," by Orosco

ENTERTAINMENT

Editor **Emmie G. Velarde**

sms feedback: inquirer ent name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) and 283 (Smart) **or email us at** pr_entertainment@inquirer.com.ph **Website:** www.inquirer.net/entertainment



DUNKIN' DONUTS

Jellooow!

Say hello to
Dunkin' Donuts Iced Coffee Jelly

Just add P10
to add chewy jelly to your
Dunkin' Donuts Iced Coffee.

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Spot the changes

Twice, Ruffa's family said no more would be said about the threatened Bektas-Gutierrez marriage annulment; Yilmaz, suppposedly, had a mouthful to say each time

THE FIRST SUCH ANNOUNCEMENT FROM the Gutierrezes came on May 8; the second, virtually the same, on May 18. Yilmaz's supposed two statements, sent to GMA 7's "Startalk" (and read on the air—both TV and radio) vary in tone, approach and personality.

Following are excerpts (and we quote the statements verbatim). Spot the changes:

YILMAS BEKTAS TV GRAB/GMA 7

May 19

I want to keep this marriage ... We're working on it now because so much damage was made ... Right now it looks like she doesn't want to see me running behind her, but only until she says she doesn't want me or doesn't love me anymore that I'm going to go on with my life.

Everyone in my family wants Ruffa back. They all love her so much.

Hopefully, when I go to the Philippines everything would be better, like I can speak to her mom and her father.

I can't blame her. If I'm going to blame her then I'd be blaming myself too. Why would I blame her family? That's my family, too.

SPOT/ F2

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Spot the changes

From page F1

Consequences

You may be a Filipino, Jewish, or Muslim. But still in a family. In a marriage two things remain constant: Love and respect.

I believe that all our actions have consequences. That if indeed I had violent tendencies, wouldn't I be smart enough to understand that I will surely suffer the consequences of my actions?

This story is already coming out in the Turkish papers. And they're all blaming me. But still, I'm keeping silent about the issues. Time will tell who's right and who's wrong.

I hated that my name is coming out in the papers. That Ruffa's and my daughters' names are out in the papers. I have access to the press people here, too. But I never asked them to write about my wife or my children.

Respect

I don't intend for other people to look at me as a poor guy. I just hope to get respect back from the Filipino people.

Again, I won't stop fighting for my family and my children until my wife tells me she doesn't need me or love me anymore.

But why do people keep jumping into conclusions? I will say now that mother Annabelle is not the materialistic relative that I was referring to. That relative knows who he or she is.

I will tell the public who is this when I come to Manila to fetch my family. I will tell you who is this before me, Ruffa, the children and I will be together.

That is my hope: To get my family back together and leave Manila as a family.

May 8

To the public opinion of Philippines, I had made one of the two most important decisions of human life on the date of March 25, 2003. And I married Ruffa Gutierrez and I owe to my wife's father who was supporting this excellent start. In my own life, I follow the lead of this respectful man, who has all the characteristics and ethics of behaving decently. On the date of May 8, 2007, I was obliged to give the second most important decision in human life, divorce. Unfortunately, the cause of this decision was once again my wife's close relations and one materialist relative of hers who take advantage over my wife and who have poor conscience and honor. Having an affair with another person is definitely not included among the reasons.

When I was 22 years old, I met [my wife], loved her with all my heart for seven years. I had departed many of my principles for her and we got married. Leaving my beloved ones after having two great children due to such ridiculous reasons cannot be discussed. Apart from the love of God I have in my heart, there is not any love I feel but the love and affection I have for Ruffa and our children. However, only my honor and pride are above my affection for my family, my love and everything I know. I prefer living a chivalrous but difficult, short life instead of living a … dishonored life full of earthly goods of the pompous world.

As I respect visions of everybody, I request the respect of others. The divorce decision is an ultimatum to my wife. This is not a result but a decision and I wish this could be considered as an ultimatum and existing problems … could be settled in cooperation with the family members. However, her family and close relations made the situation even worse instead of being constructive. Ruffa is unable to show enough attention to her family due to her own professional career and profession.

And she extended her stay in the Philippines without my consent are the only causes of our decision for getting divorced. Subsequently a series of mutual negative, psychological and physical violence and suppression events experienced … the bursting up of this happy family. Ruffa consciously and willingly lay the ground for the beginning of this decline with the support of her family and without feeling the need for soul searching.

Differences

However, my innocent daughters, aged 2 and 3, are under a heavy burden due to meaningless decisions taken in eagerness for fame without making soul searching. And in my opinion, this is not fair. I would like to remind that those children are not eager for fame or money. The most important wish of a child is seeing parents together, who have brought him or her into this world without asking the child.

Ruffa mentioned the cultural differences

SPOT/F5

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G1 GLORIETTA 1	1 28 WEEKS LATER	2 SHREK 3	3 WHISPER	4 SPIDER-MAN 3
G4 GLORIETTA 4	1 SHREK 3	2 LUCKY YOU / JUDGEMENT DAY (7:00 pm)	3 THX SHREK 3 GUARANTEED SEATS	
	4 WHISPER	5 FRACTURE	6 SHREK 3	7 SPIDER-MAN 3
GB1 GREENBELT 1	1 SPIDER-MAN 3	2 SHREK 3		
GB3 GREENBELT 3	1 THX SHREK 3 GUARANTEED SEATS	2 THX SPIDER-MAN 3 GUARANTEED SEATS		
	3 FRACTURE GUARANTEED SEATS	4 SHREK 3 GUARANTEED SEATS	5 SHREK 3 GUARANTEED SEATS	
ATC ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1 THX SHREK 3 GUARANTEED SEATS	2 SPIDER-MAN 3		
	3 FRACTURE	4 WHISPER	5 SHREK 3	
ACC AYALA CENTER CEBU	1 SPIDER-MAN 3	2 WHISPER	3 TURISTAS	4 GRAY MATTERS
M2 MARKET! MARKET!	1 SHREK 3	2 FRACTURE		
	3 WHISPER	4 SHREK 3	5 SPIDER-MAN 3	

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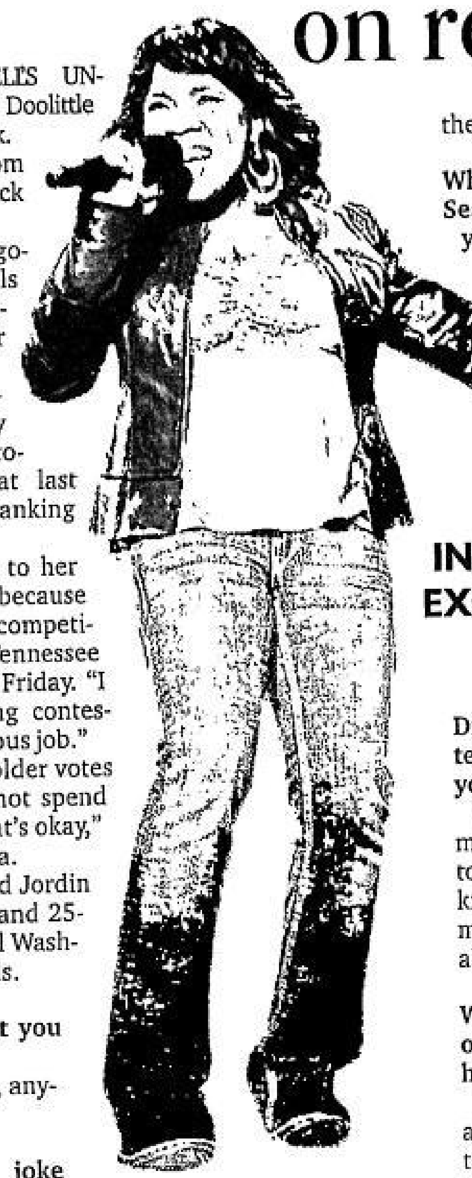
Melinda wore 'Whitney' on results night

By Kathryn Fatima Reyes

INQUIRER EXCLUSIVE



MELINDA Doolittle, who was eliminated last week, performs in front of the judges on "American Idol."

EVEN WITH SIMON COWELL'S UNabashed endorsement, Melinda Doolittle couldn't escape the boot last week.

Melinda's elimination from "American Idol" came as a shock to many.

Cowell had told her: "If I'm going to award a place in the finals to the person who has consistently delivered week after week, it's you."

Clearly, she was his favorite. Wire news agency Reuters quoted the hardest-to-please judge as saying that last week's result was "unfair," yanking Melinda from the finals.

But, none of that matters to her now. "I really feel like I won because of where I ended up in the competition," the 29-year-old from Tennessee said in a conference call on Friday. "I was up against two amazing contestants. I think they did a fabulous job."

"I knew I was getting the older votes [and older viewers] might not spend two full hours voting, but that's okay," said the ever graceful Melinda.

On Wednesday, 17-year-old Jordin Sparks (Glendale, Arizona) and 25-year-old Blake Lewis (Bothell Washington) slug it out in the finals.

What style of album might you come out with?

Just soul music. You know, anything from the heart.

Who did you laugh or joke around with the most on the show?

Everybody is hilarious out here. I'm kind of the *momma* of the bunch [and] I call them all my babies. Jordin, being the youngest, is my baby girl. Blake is kind of the class clown.

What went through your mind when Ryan Seacrest said the journey had ended for you?

When he called me upfront, I kind of had an idea that it would be me. So I was just kind of taking deep breaths and kind of ready to go to the next step. It wasn't as bad as I thought it was going to be. It was actually a happy occasion that I made it this far. So I'm kind of glad it turned out that way.

Did you get a chance to speak to Simon afterwards? He was such a big supporter of yours the whole time.

I did. He told me that he really believed in me and wanted me succeed. And that's great to hear, especially coming from Simon, you know. But all of the judges were so sweet to me afterwards, and just really encouraging about what's to come in the future.

When you sang on "Woman" you brought out the backup singers. Was that sort of an homage to your past as a backup singer?

I had remembered doing the song before and going back to sing with them the first time, and those girls are amazing and I like to call them support singers now, because they're not really backup singers; they can all hold their own upfront. I love the fact that people get to see them in their element,

MELINDA/ F4

MTRCB Rating ▶ G | All Ages Admitted
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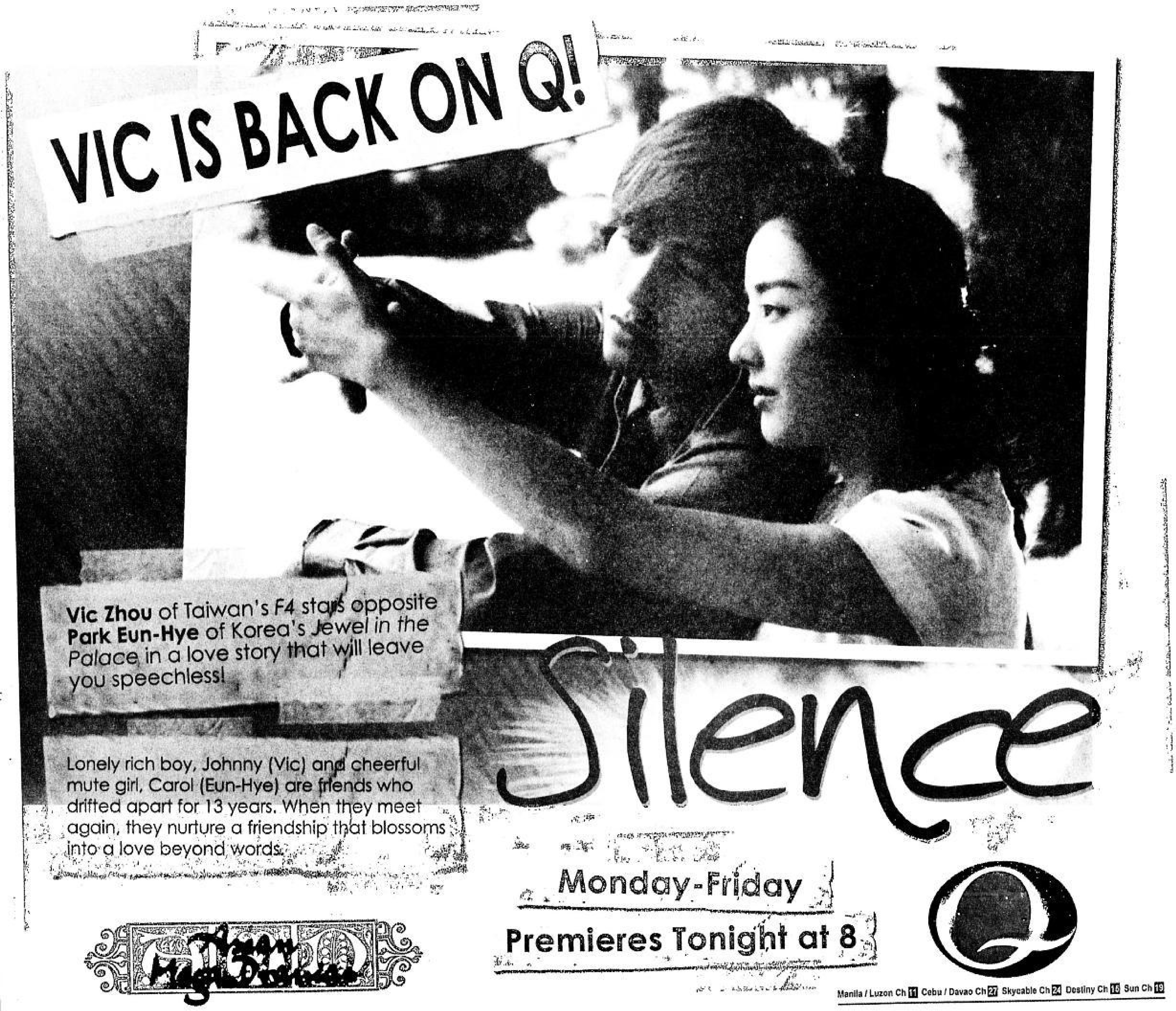

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Q
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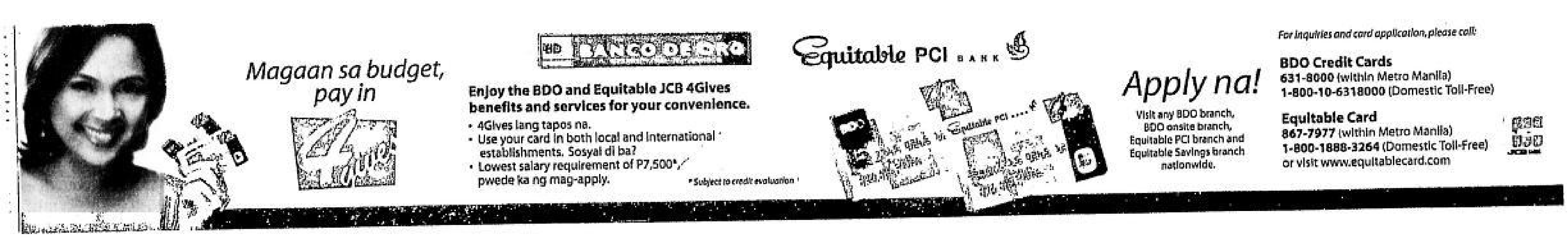

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SPIDER-MAN 3
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2 SPIDER-MAN 3
3 SPIDER-MAN 3
4 SHREK 3
5 FRACTURE
6 WHISPER
7 SPIDER-MAN 3
8 SHREK 3
9 28 WEEKS LATER
10 CONDEMNED
11 SHREK 3
12 SPIDER-MAN 3

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1 WHISPER
2 SPIDER-MAN 3
3 SPIDER-MAN 3
4 SHREK 3
5 28 WEEKS LATER
6 FRACTURE
7 LUCKY YOU
8 CONDEMNED
9 SPIDER-MAN 3
10 SHREK 3
11 SPIDER-MAN 3
12 THE SHOOTER

SM CITY FAIRVIEW 935-0749
1 FRACTURE
2 28 WEEKS LATER
3 SPIDER-MAN 3
4 SPIDER-MAN 3
5 SHREK 3
6 CONDEMNED
7 SHREK 3
8 WHISPER
9 SPIDER-MAN 3
10 SPIDER-MAN 3
11 ANG CUTE NG INA MO
12 LUCKY YOU

SM CITY STA. MESA 716-1416
1 SPIDER-MAN 3
2 FRACTURE
3 SHREK 3
4 SHREK 3
5 SPIDER-MAN 3
6 ANG CUTE NG INA MO
7 28 WEEKS LATER
8 LUCKY YOU
9 WHISPER
10 CONDEMNED

SM CITY SAN LAZARO 786-2488
1 SPIDER-MAN 3
2 SPIDER-MAN 3
3 FRACTURE
4 CONDEMNED/ SHREK 3
5 WHISPER
6 SHREK 3

SM SOUTHMALL 806-6888
1 SHREK 3
2 WHISPER
3 SPIDER-MAN 3
4 SHREK 3
5 SPIDER-MAN 3
6 28 WEEKS LATER
7 CONDEMNED
8 FRACTURE
9 ANG CUTE NG INA MO

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1 SPIDER-MAN 3
2 SHREK 3
3 WHISPER
4 SPIDER-MAN 3

SM CITY MANILA 523-9240
1 SHREK 3
2 WHISPER
3 FRACTURE
4 SPIDER-MAN 3
5 SHREK 3
6 SPIDER-MAN 3
7 SPIDER-MAN 3
8 SPIDER-MAN 3
9 SPIDER-MAN 3
10 CONDEMNED
11 28 WEEKS LATER
12 LUCKY YOU

SM CITY DASMARINAS (046)4323201-04
1 SPIDER-MAN 3
2 WHISPER
3 PERFECT STRANGER
4 SHREK 3

SM VALENZUELA 293-3917
1 SHREK 3
2 28 WEEKS LATER
3 WHISPER
4 SPIDER-MAN 3

SM CITY SUCAT 829-4975
1 SPIDER-MAN 3/ SHREK 3
2 SPIDER-MAN 3
3 SPIDER-MAN 3
4 WHISPER

Shrek 3
OPENS MAY 18

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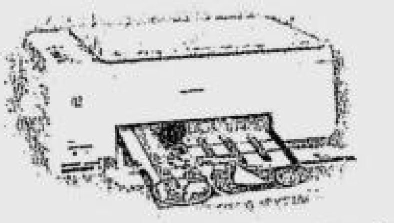

Be one of the 10 lucky winners by simply sending us a drawing of how you imagine Shrek's baby will look like!

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1 CONDEMNED
2 WHISPER
3 SPIDER-MAN 3
4 SHREK 3
5 SHREK 3
6 SPIDER-MAN 3
7 FRACTURE
8 28 WEEKS LATER

SM CITY CLARK (045)625-5844-45
1 THE SHOOTER
2 SHREK 3
3 PERFECT STRANGER
4 WHISPER
5 SPIDER-MAN 3
6 FIREHOUSE DOG

SM CITY MARILAO (044)9332013-17
1 SHREK 3
2 SPIDER-MAN 3
3 SPIDER-MAN 3
4 WHISPER

SM CITY BATANGAS 885-6401-04
1 PERFECT STRANGER
2 SPIDER-MAN 3
3 THE REAPING
4 SHREK 3

SM CITY PAMPANGA (045)9637681-85
1 SPIDER-MAN 3
2 PAN'S LABYRINTH
3 FIREHOUSE DOG
4 PERFECT STRANGER
5 WHISPER
6 SHREK 3

SM CIY LIPA (043) 784-0187
1 THE REAPING
2 SHREK 3
3 SPIDER-MAN 3
4 THE SHOOTER

SM CITY LUCENA (042)7108977-80
1 SPIDER-MAN 3
2 SUNSHINE
3 THE LAST MIMZY
4 SHREK 3

SM CITY BAGUIO (074)6197838-39
1 SPIDER-MAN 3
2 WHISPER
3 SUNSHINE
4 SPIDER-MAN 3

SM SUPERCENTER MOLINO (046)474-3100
1 SHREK 3
2 SPIDER-MAN 3
3 SPIDER-MAN 3
4 CONDEMNED

SM CITY STA. ROSA (049)5349811
1 SPIDER-MAN 3
2 WHISPER
3 SHREK 3
4 SPIDER-MAN 3

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SM CITY DAVAO (082)2976998
1 SPIDER-MAN 3
2 PERFECT STRANGER
3 SPIDER-MAN 3
4 ROCKY BALBOA
5 WHISPER
6 SHREK 3

SM CITY CAGAYAN (088)859-2884
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3 SUNSHINE
4 SPIDER-MAN 3

SM CITY ILOILO (033)3209422
1 TURISTAS
2 SHREK 3
3 SHREK 3
4 SPIDER-MAN 3
5 SPIDER-MAN 3
6 THE REAPING
7 PAN'S LABYRINTH
8 PERFECT STRANGER

SM CITY CEBU (032)231-3876
1 SPIDER-MAN 3
2 SHREK 3
3 SHREK 3
4 PERFECT STRANGER
5 WHISPER
6 PREMONITION/ TURISTAS
7 SHREK 3
8 SPIDER-MAN 3

SM CITY BACOLOD (034) 708 1010
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1 SPIDER-MAN 3 • THX
1:15 4:05 6:55 9:45

2 SPIDER-MAN 3
10:40 1:30 4:20 7:10 10:000

3 WHISPER
12:20 2:45 5:10 7:35 10:00

4 SHREK 3
2:50 5:00 7:10 9:20

5 SHREK 3
3:20 5:30 7:40 9:50

6 FRACTURE
12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00

7 LUCKY YOU
12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00

8 indieSine: SANDALANG BAHAY
1:10 3:00 4:50 6:40 8:30

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4 28 WEEKS LATER
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5 SPIDER-MAN 3
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6 SHREK 3
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4 28 WEEKS LATER
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5 FRACTURE
1:05 3:45 6:25 9:05

6 THE CONDEMNED
11:20 1:45 4:15 6:45 9:10

7 SPIDER-MAN 3
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Melinda wore …

From page F3

too. That was my motivation.

Since you're friends with Mandisa [Hundley] from last season, did she give you any advice?

Mandisa has been great. She's been the person that understands what I'm going through, so if I need to bounce anything off of her, I can. She's been a rock.

Paula [Abdul] once said she really wanted you to let loose. Is there a song where you felt you finally did?

Sadly, I think the first time I let loose was after I got eliminated. There's so much that goes through your head while you're onstage, getting ready to be judged and getting ready to be voted on, that I don't know if I completely achieved letting loose. I think I got close. That [results] night was kind of a full-circle moment for me. I was able to just let go and have a great time onstage. It really meant a lot to me.

What will you take away from your "Idol" experience?

The biggest thing is, that I know I was really scared to do this at the beginning. And the fact that I was able to step out and do it even in the midst of fear, kind of just gave me an outlook on how strong God has helped me become and how much I've grown from it. I've found my own voice, as opposed to my blending voice, singing background, and I couldn't have asked for more from this experience.

You and your mother seem very close. How did she react last night and what words of advice have your family members given you?

Well, my mom was at home, and so she called me and was so, so encouraging and so sweet about everything, and just wanted to first of all make sure I was okay. And then once I told her I was okay she was like, "Great, then I'm okay. We're going to take this and run with it."

There was a point when you not only just looked better and more confident, but also looked sexier. Where did that come from?

Oh goodness, I have no idea.

I think I'm going to blame it on the new wig then.

Were you wearing a wig?

Oh my goodness, every week!

I love them so much, I've named them. So I think on results night I had Whitney on, and Whitney is my new favorite. I call her Whitney, so maybe she helped out with that one.

How do you feel about the fans'

MELINDA/F5

Spot the changes

From page F2

and put forward it as an excuse. This is strange. Moreover, the fact that she has told this cultural difference after seven years is even stranger. Love and truth do not have one religion, language and culture. I share all my views with Turkish and Philippines media and public because I want to explain the seemingly fabulous worlds of fame are actually very dark. And their price is nothing but destruction and sadness first of all to my own children and then to Turkish and Philippines community.

Finally, when it comes to getting divorced with Ruffa, arrangements are to be made once we give our final positive or negative decision as two civilized individuals. It shall be carried out by our attorneys. I assure you that I will do my best so that I can protect this home for the sake of my children. I call for praise of individuals respecting the family concept so that I can protect this home. Regardless of all negative aspects of life, I will never forget your hospitality towards me and your smiles I had experienced for seven years. Philippines shall always live in my heart as my second fatherland.

Melinda wore …

From page F4

shock and support from the elimination?

It feels wonderful. At that point in the competition it's kind of like, "Well, there's only three of us, so one of us has to go home." I'm just grateful that people wanted me to stick around and believed in me. That means the world to me.

What do you think of the final two?

First of all, Jordin is 17 years old and it does not make any sense to me for a 17-year-old to be able to sing so amazingly well. I am just in awe of her. She's got one of the most mature voices I've ever heard. And gosh, she's got such a pure heart, and I think it comes through when she sings.

Blake, I think that he may quite possibly be one of the most original performers "American Idol" has ever had. He takes a song, he makes it his own, whether it's beat boxing, dancing, kind of putting a different groove to it. I believe that he took risks and I am so proud of him for doing that and for stepping out and making people listen to a different style.

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3 SPIDERMAN 3 12:30 / 3:10 / 5:50 / 8:30
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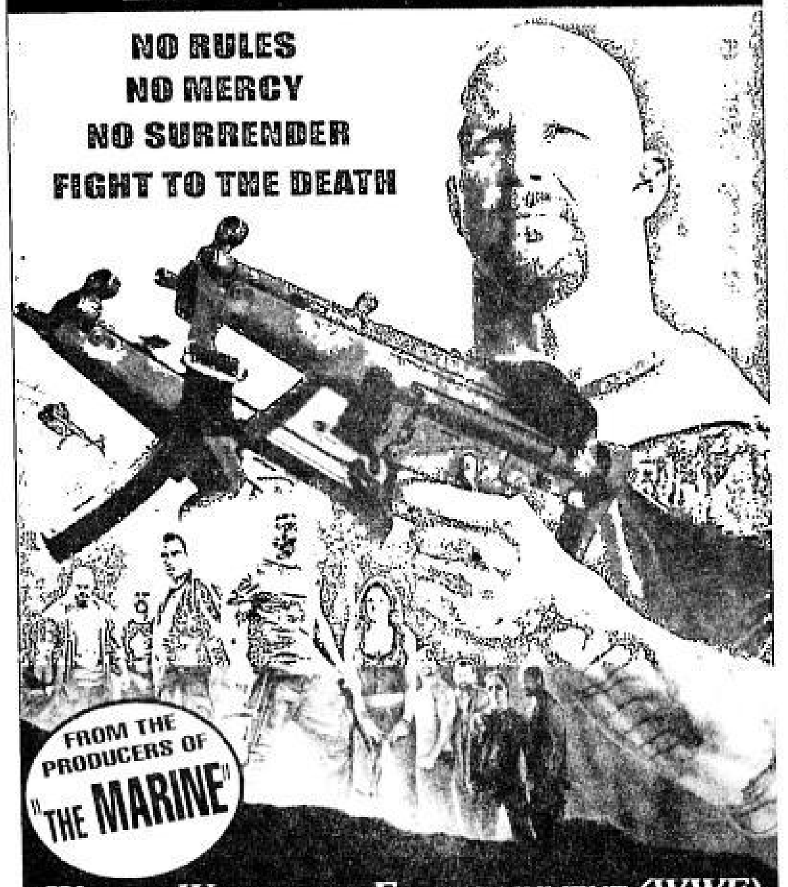

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Humor in his chromosomes

By Cora Lucas

> Hilarity was the common thread of Yoyoy Villame's songs, whether about cavemen, geography or physical fitness. He had a Christmas album that took potshots at the Manila filmfest scam in the '90s—'Take It, Take It (Pasko ng Fiasco)'

YESTERDAY

AFTER PLAYING NOVELTY MUSIC FOR OVER four decades, what does one do for an encore?

Singer-composer Roman "Yoyoy" Villame didn't need a swan song.

The Visayan music artist who died of cardiac arrest Friday at age 75, had carried the torch for novelty music since 1965. Even before he burst into the mainstream music scene in 1972, warbling "Magellan," a ditty of historical facts, he was already a recording artist in Tagbilaran, where he had cut his first long-playing album, an all-Visayan selection except for "Magellan," an English cut.

Yoyoy's recognition might have taken some time coming, but he was destined for the big time, as subsequent events proved.

Public demand

A product of insistent public demand, the singer from Calate, Bohol, had counted on the power of humor to work its charm on Pinoy music lovers. Hilarity was the common thread of his songs, whether about cavemen ("Tarzan at Barok"), geography ("My Country, My Philippines") or physical fitness ("Mag-exercise Tayo"). He had a Christmas album that took potshots at the Manila Film Festival scam in the '90s: "Take It, Take It (Pasko ng Fiasco)."

But the song that would prove to be his most popular yet was "Butsikik," a lively tongue-twister of indecipherable lyrics that sound faintly Chinese. The song produced several covers—from a cutesy version by Aiza Seguerra to a classical take by The Company.

Controversial hit

What became a radio staple was marred by controversy, though. The Chinese community in Cebu, who had felt mocked by the song, demanded that it be stricken off the jukebox play list. An amused Yoyoy would later reveal that a plan to bring the case to court had misfired: The complainants could not find a single Chinese word in the song.

Businessmen, not a few of them Chinese, ended up re-placing the ditty in jukeboxes. After all, it was the most *patok* in the lineup.

But then the same song kept Yoyoy from staging concerts in Russia and China where, he jested, as he feared he wouldn't be received well precisely because of "Butsikik."

YOYOY Villame, singer-composer, was also an actor, mechanic, driver and politico.

Serious person

Born Nov. 18, 1932, the stocky, bubbly entertainer was, ironically, a serious person off-stage. But he must have had humor in his chromosomes to be able to sketch a true picture of life through his songs.

Yoyoy told us in an earlier interview at his Las Piñas residence: "*Noong* elementary *pa lang ako nagko*-compose *na ako ng kanta sa* Boy Scout *sa amin sa* Calate, Bohol. *Pag hindi ako sinasali ng mga* teacher *ko sa* program *inaaway ko. Masasaya ang mga tao doon sa amin. Mahilig sa mga harana, kanta-kantahan sa umpuk-umpukan, gita-gitara sa inum-inuman. Hanggang 'yung mga gawa-gawa kong kanta nag*-click *sa grupo-grupo.*"

Jeepney driver

An auto mechanic course graduate in Tagbilaran, Bohol, the youngest of 10 children came to Manila as a soldier-trainee of the Philippine Army. He was sent to Pampanga during the time of the Hukbalahap in 1952. Unhappy with his post, he quickly asked for a discharge after the surrender of rebel leader Luis Taruc.

He ended up becoming a passenger jeepney driver plying the Baclaran-Pasay Taft-Santa Cruz-Dimasalang route.

"*Sampung taon din akong nag*-drive *ng* jeepney *sa* Manila," he said. "*Minsan nagko*-compose *na rin ako habang nagda*-drive. *Pag may nakita akong* unique, *ginagawan ko ng kanta.*"

A little known fact is that Yoyoy was a frustrated *kundiman* singer. Back in his king-of-the-road days, he would often join the then famous Plaza Miranda amateur singing contest where the likes of Ike Lozada, Diomedes Maturan and the Reycards were discovered.

The big break

"*Pero matigas daw ang dila ko—Bisayang-Bisaya,*" he lamented.

It was when he went back home to Bohol in 1965 that his break finally came. The manager of the MB Liner fleet of passenger buses, where he had also worked as driver, saw his potential and put up his own recording studio, Kinamay Records, just for Yoyoy. There, the singer who used to perform only in "baptisms, weddings and funerals" recorded his first album.

The songs, which became big favorites on the airwaves, reached Manila and saw Yoyoy leaping from the recording studio to the big screen. These included "Magellan," his first and biggest hit.

Over 50 films

Comedian Chiquito built him up in the movies. His first on-screen appearance was in "Isla Limasawa," where "Magellan" was used as theme song. He would do over 50 more movies, some of which were independently produced, like the acclaimed "Babae Sa Breakwater," where he played a Visayan troubadour, and "Pepot Artista," where his songs landed in the soundtrack. "My Country, My Philippines" was played in the opening scene of "Ang Pagdadalaga ni Maximo Oliveros."

There was no need to pound on recording companies' doors for a contract. Vicor and Alpha Records came knocking on *his* door. "Mag-exercise Tayo" ruled local charts in 1977.

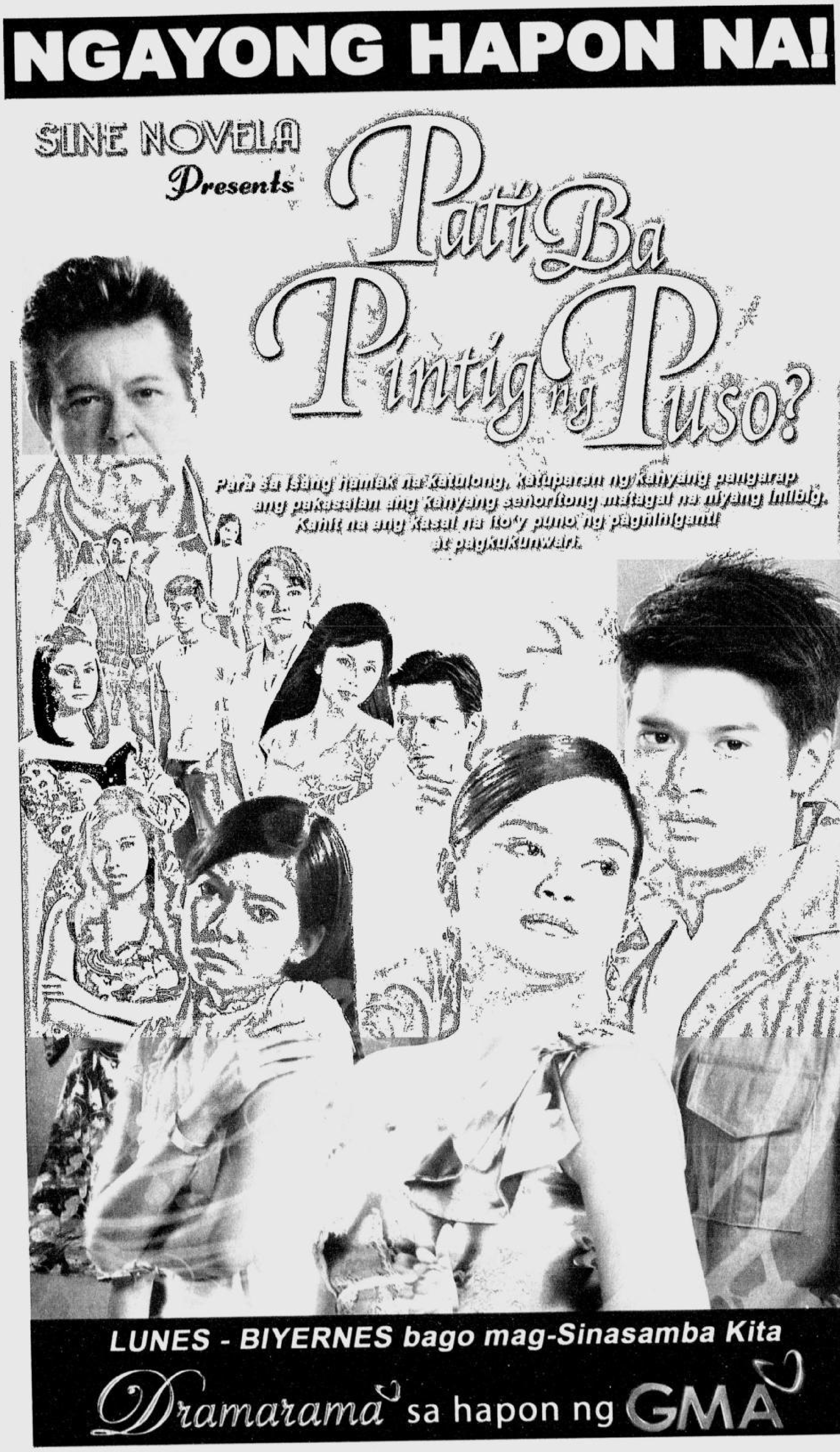
Yoyoy cut more than 25 albums and won several sales awards, among them a double platinum for his album "Tirana My Dear" and a platinum for "McArthur and Dagohoy" in 1991. He also won Best Novelty for "Piyesta ng mga Isda" in the 1993 Awit Awards.

Political career

Outside show business, he was Las Piñas City councilor from 1988 to 1998. As public servant, his performance was likewise a hit, but nothing close to his performance as an entertainer and recording artist.

Last Friday, Yoyoy was rushed to the Las Piñas Medical Center after complaining of chest pains and difficulty in breathing. He was admitted at 9 a.m. and passed away at 12 noon.

He was married to former nightclub singer Tessie, with whom he had six children—Hannah Jane, Apple, Olivia, Roman Jr., Lillian and John. Hannah Jane is also a singer.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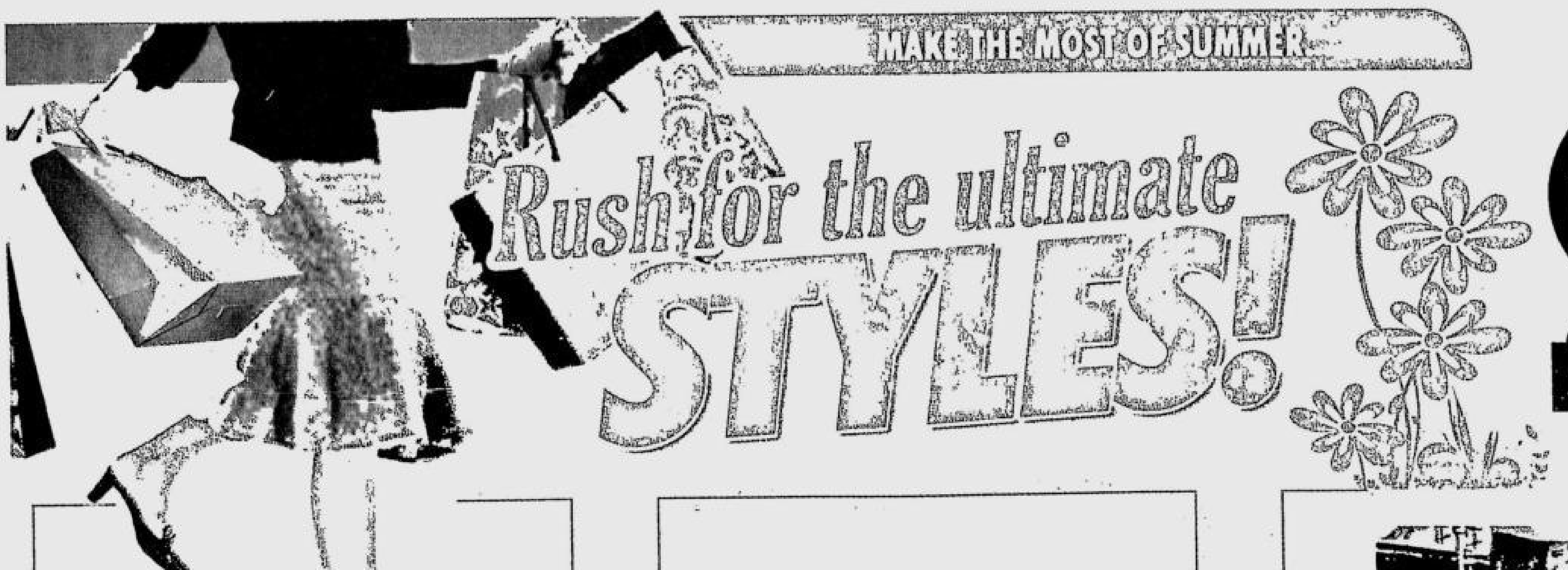

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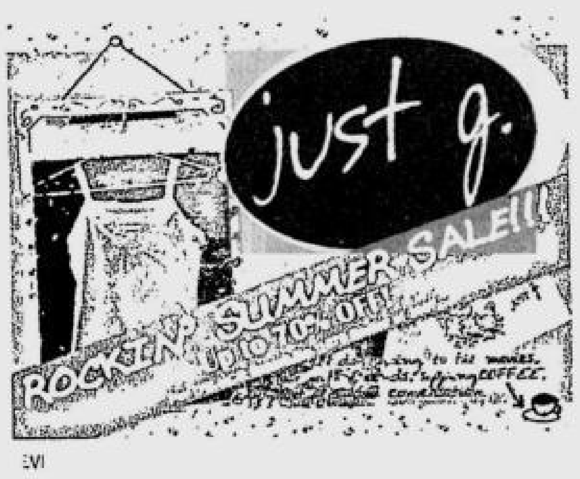
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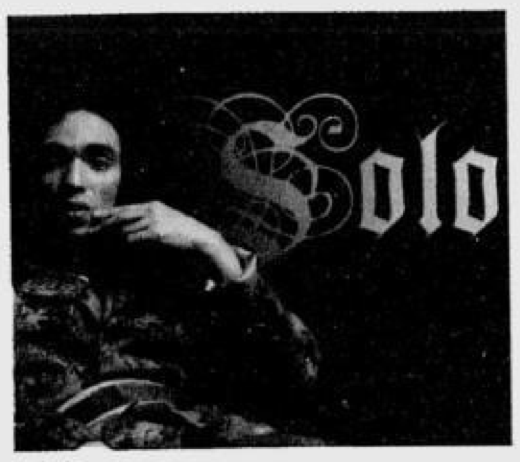

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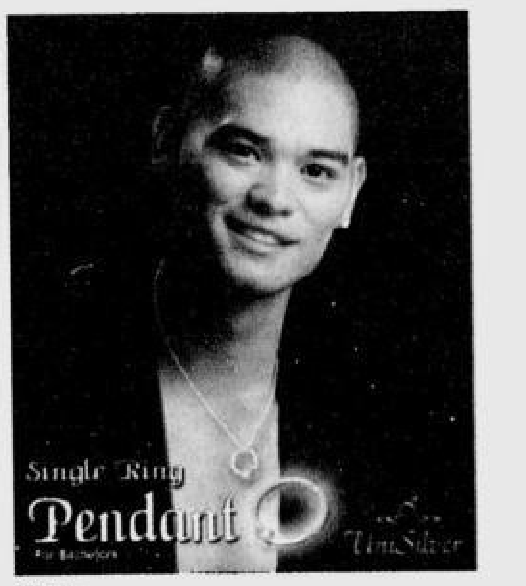
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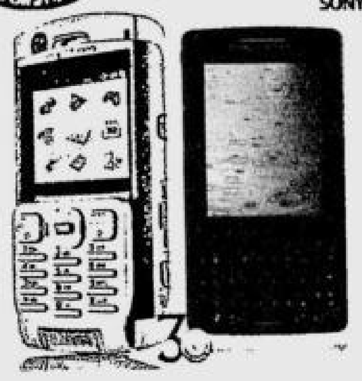

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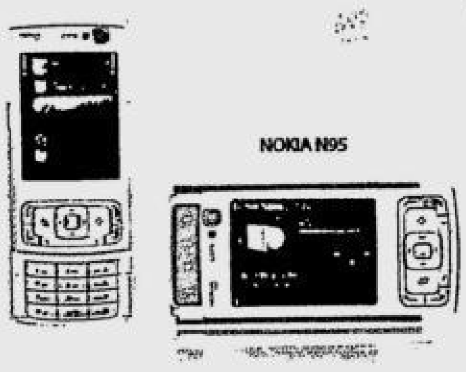

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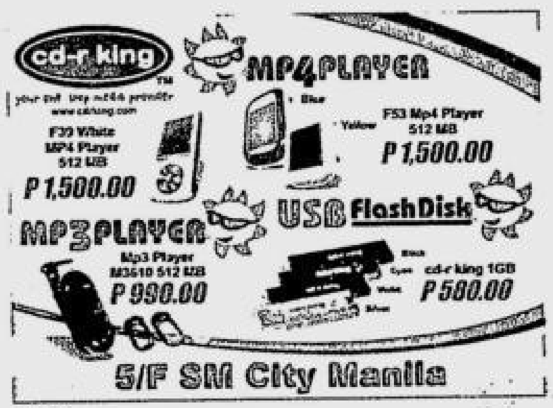

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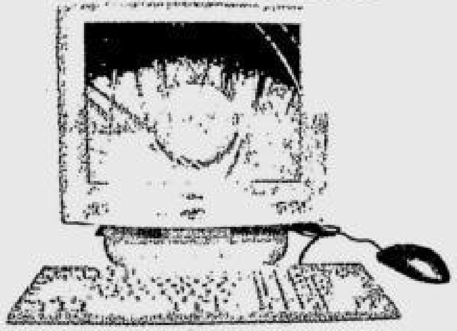

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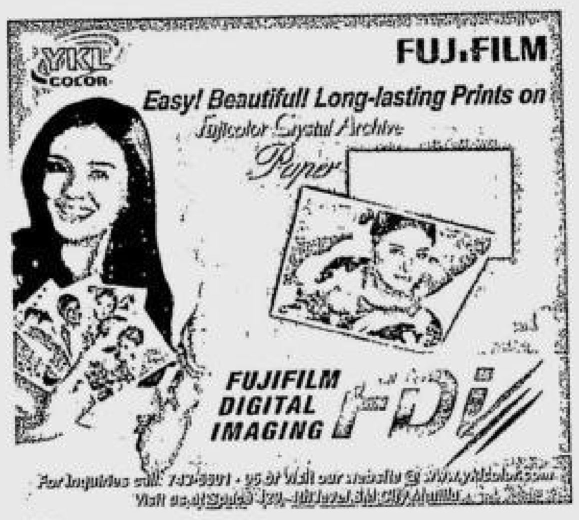
capture summer memories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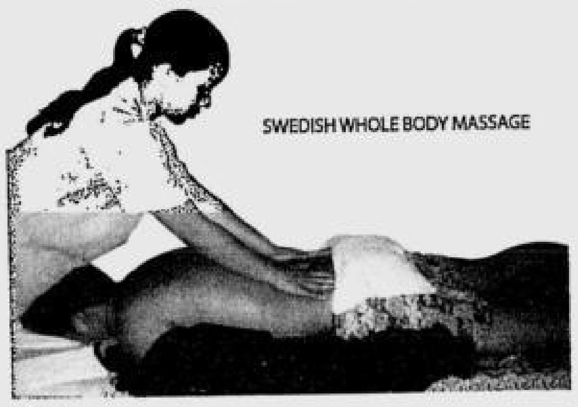

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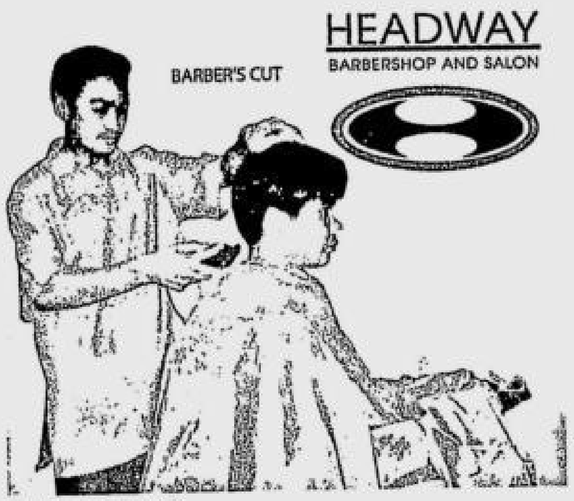

FLOOR

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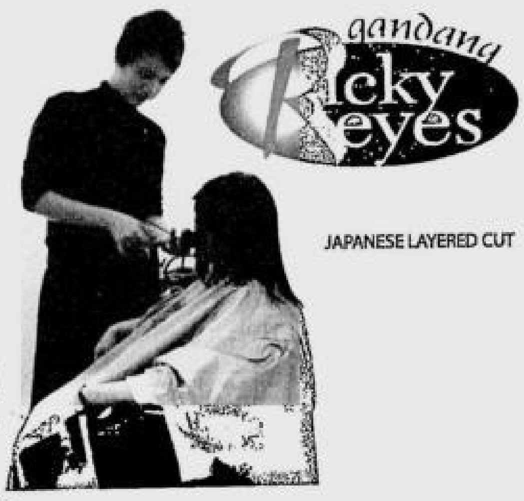

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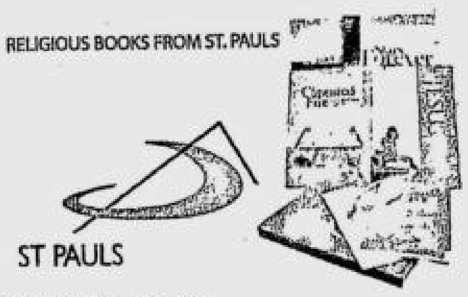

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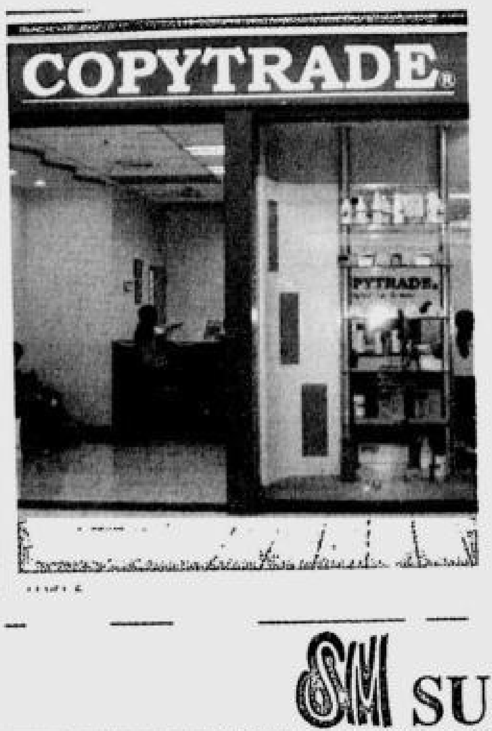

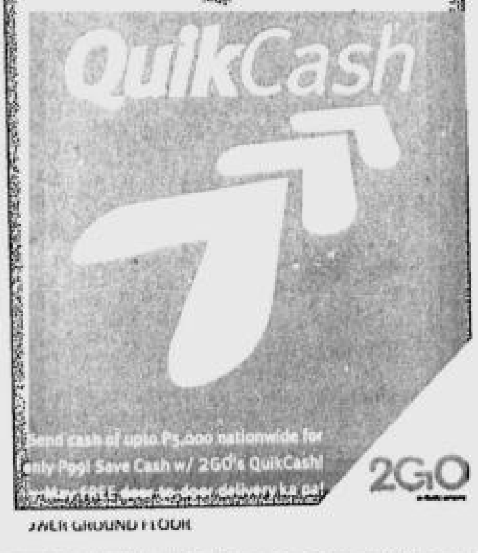
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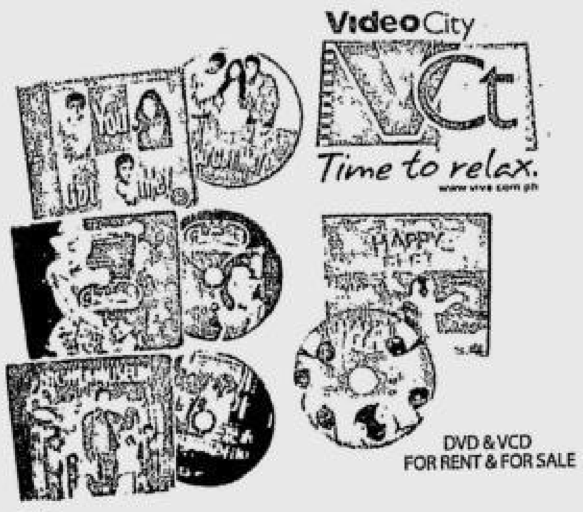
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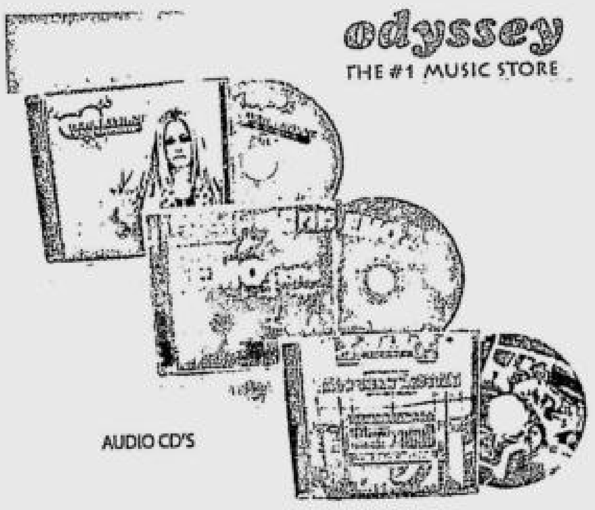
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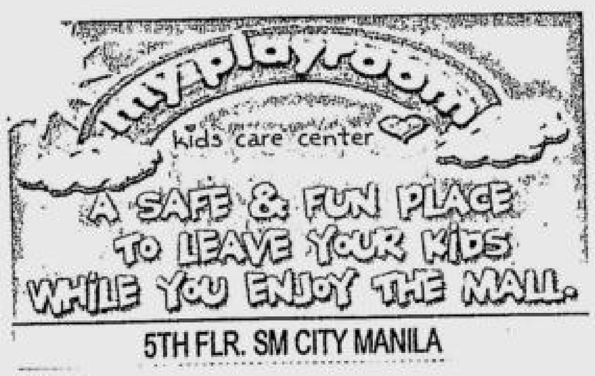
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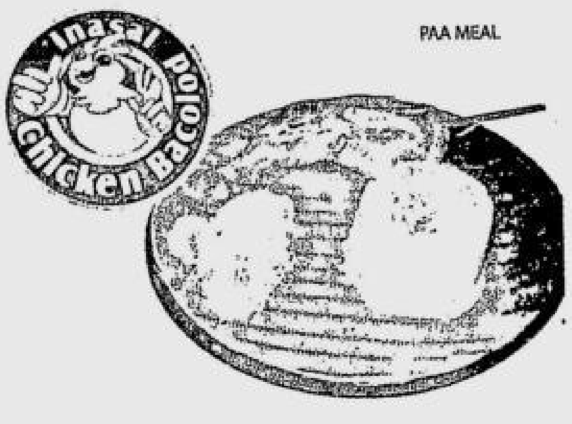
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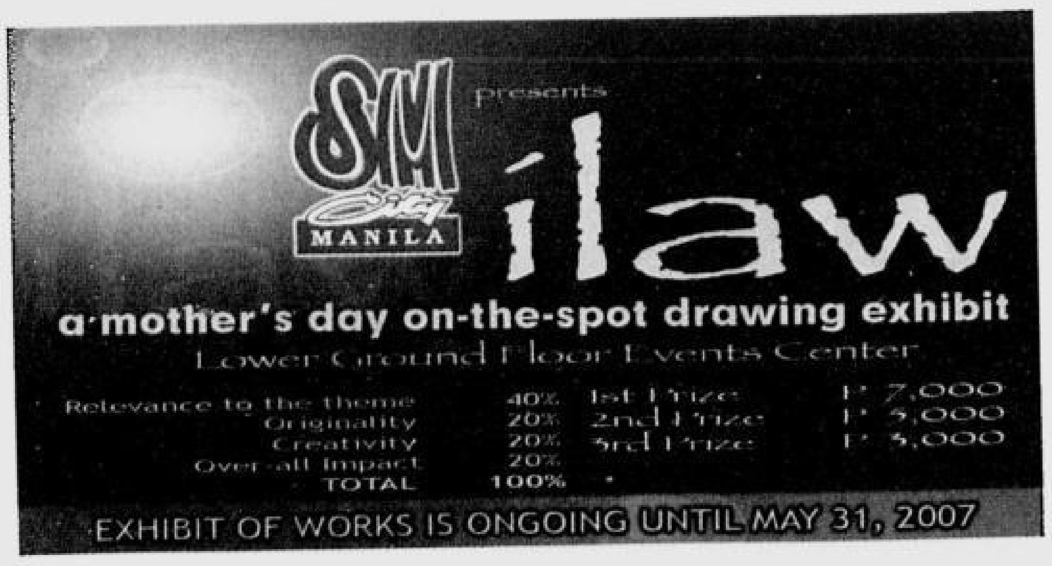

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Lower Ground Floor Events Center

Relevance to the theme	40%
Originality	20%
Creativity	20%
Over-all Impact	20%
TOTAL	100%

1st Prize P 7,000
2nd Prize P 5,000
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EXHIBIT OF WORKS IS ONGOING UNTIL MAY 31, 2007

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